Confronting conflict in Africa

Secretary-General Kofi Annan candidly explores causes, potential cures

By **Salim Lone**

Zimbabwean peacekeepers in Angola: "Wherever possible," says Mr. Annan, "the international community should strive to complement rather than supplant African efforts to resolve Africa's problems."

In perhaps his most important political report to date, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has analyzed in remarkably candid terms the causes of conflict in Africa. In the report, issued in April, Mr. Annan also proposed a comprehensive set of far-reaching, "realistic and achievable" measures designed to significantly reduce political tensions and violence within and between African states.

The report, *The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa**, which the Security Council had requested, came against a backdrop of significant political and economic achievements on the continent, and the emergence of leaders with confidence in Africa's ability to chart a path to peace and higher levels of development. These recent successes have sparked renewed international interest in Africa, and the report has the potential to secure wide African and international support at a time when, the Secretary-General observed, efforts to break with past patterns "are at last beginning to succeed."

The Secretary-General's recommendations derive strength in significant part from the candour with which his report analyzed causes — and responsibility — for conflict in Africa.

"Unless good governance is prized, Africa will not break free of the threat and the reality of conflict which are so evident today."

"By not averting these colossal human tragedies [as in Rwanda, Somalia and Liberia]," said the Secretary-General, "African leaders have failed the peoples of Africa; the international community has failed them; the United Nations has failed them." Repeatedly, the Secretary-General called on all concerned to "summon the political will" to produce positive change in Africa.

"The United Nations stands ready to play its part," Mr. Annan declared. "So must the world. So must Africa."

Africa today must more than ever look at itself, the Secretary-General asserted, given the renewed momentum in the continent's quest for peace and greater prosperity. However, he added, African efforts need stronger international support politically, as well as in the economic area, where greater debt relief and market access for more diversified African exports are crucial to ensuring the higher living standards that promote stability.

In what is one of the most concise and authoritative primers on the causes and cures for African conflict, the report noted that 14 of the continent's 53 countries were afflicted by armed conflict in 1996 alone, and over 30 wars have occurred in Africa since 1970, mostly within states. These accounted for "more than half of all war-related deaths worldwide" and caused over 8 million people to become refugees, returnees and displaced persons.

While no transgressors were named, the report went on to say that even in this post-Cold War period, foreign interests continue to play a large role in sustaining some conflicts in the competition for oil and other African resources.

African states were not spared either; even as he paid them tribute for their growing peacekeeping and mediation efforts, the Secretary-General pointed out that the role some of them play "in supporting and sometimes even in instigating conflicts in neighbouring countries must be candidly acknowledged."

In focusing on the various actors who help to fan conflict, Mr. Annan strongly criticized international arms merchants as being among those "who profit from conflict in Africa." He recommended that Member States pass legislation making the violation of Security Council arms embargoes by individuals or corporations a criminal offense under their national laws. Although public identification of arms merchants has been difficult, the Secretary-General asserted that possibly no other single initiative would do more to help combat the flow of illicit arms to Africa. The report asked the Security Council to address this issue as a matter of urgency, including how the UN might support the compiling, tracking and publicizing of such information.

Zero-growth for arms spending

At the same time, while recognizing the rights of states to provide for their own defence, the Secretary-General called upon African states to reduce their purchases of arms and munitions to below 1.5 per cent of GDP, and to commit themselves to a zero-growth policy for defence budgets for a period of 10 years.

He noted the "long-term distortions" in Africa's political economy and the authoritarian legacies of colonialism which helped produce the "winner-takes-all" and highly personalized forms of governance seen in parts of the continent. With the frequent lack of peaceful means to change or replace leadership and the "often violent politicization of ethnicity," Mr. Annan said conflict becomes virtually inevitable.

**The full text of the report is available on the internet at <www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec>*

Among other participants, Cameroon's Ambassador Martin Belinga Eboutou specifically endorsed the proposal to compile and publish the names of "merchants of death" who traffic in arms, urging the international community to help put an end to such "illegal and deadly activities." Ambassador Antonio Monteiro of Portugal stressed that arms collected at the end of one conflict should not end up being used in another, affirming that the UN had a role to play in ensuring that such weapons are destroyed. Mr. Hisashi Owada, Japan's Permanent Representative, said that the UN Register of Conventional Arms, which was created in 1991 at the initiative of Japan in collaboration with the European Union, should be supplemented by regional registers, especially in Africa.

Mr. Owada, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata and a number of others touched on the complex problems of delivering humanitarian relief in the midst of conflict. Many echoed Mr. Annan's stress on the importance of separating refugees from combatants and providing special assistance to countries hosting large numbers of refugees.

The Secretary-General's key recommendations include:

On arms and arms trafficking

- UN Member States should pass laws enabling prosecution in national courts of violations of Security Council arms embargoes.
- The Security Council should urgently consider how the UN might help compile, track and publicize information on arms trafficking.
- African governments should reduce purchases of arms and munitions to 1.5 per cent of gross domestic product, and maintain zero-growth on defence budgets for the next decade.

On sanctions

- Economic sanctions are too often a blunt instrument, and should be better targeted, for example, by freezing the assets of decision-makers, their organizations and their families and through restrictions on travel.
- Combatants should be held financially liable to their victims under international law, where civilians have been deliberately targeted; international legal machinery should be developed to help find and seize the assets of transgressors.

On refugees

- An international mechanism should be established to help host governments maintain the security and neutrality of refugee camps. Such camps should be located away from borders; combatants should be separated from genuine refugees.

On structural adjustment

- The Bretton Woods institutions should consider providing "peace-friendly" structural adjustment programmes.
- Conditionalities must not be antithetical to a peace process; donors should not cut off funds from a weak government making good-faith, popularly supported efforts to implement peace agreements.

On development assistance

- Aid should be restructured to focus on high-impact areas (rural water supply, basic education, primary health) and to reduce dependency.
- Donors should strive to ensure that at least 50 per cent of their aid to Africa is spent in Africa.
- New sources of funding are required from donor countries.

On debt and trade

- The scope of the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund should be greatly expanded since only four African countries have so far met its conditions.
- All creditors should convert into grants all remaining official bilateral debt of the poorest African countries.
- Creditors should consider clearing the entire debt stock of the poorest African countries, as requested by the OAU.
- The Group of 8 industrialized countries should consider eliminating trade barriers to African products.

On the Security Council

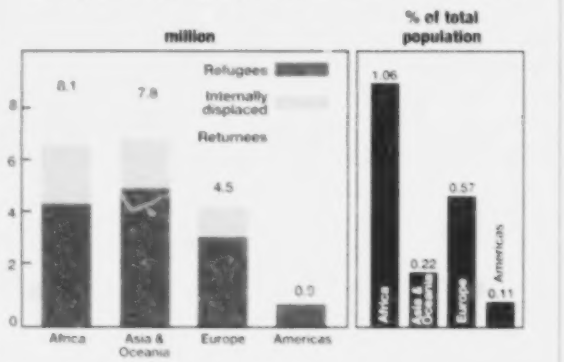
- The Security Council should meet every two years at ministerial level to assess efforts undertaken and actions required to support peace and development in Africa.
- The Council should consider convening, within five years, a summit-level session for the same purpose.

On international business practices

- Countries implementing the Convention Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions should set a timetable for early enactment of national legislation.
- The OAU should draw up by the year 2000 an African Convention on the Conduct of Public Officials and the Transparency of Public Administration.

Uprooted by conflict

Refugees, displaced persons and returnees, 1997



Source: UN Africa Recovery from UN High Commissioner for Refugees data

Poverty breeds conflict

Numerous speakers also addressed the economic and social factors that influence political stability in Africa, agreeing with the strong emphasis in the Secretary-General's report on understanding conflicts' complex roots and seeking comprehensive solutions.

Mr. Mapuranga, on behalf of the OAU, questioned whether higher economic growth rates signal an "African renaissance," when poverty remains widespread, education and health spending have declined and unemployment is growing. "We have on our hands cases of African countries whose economic statistics are improving, and are even impressive, but are not matched by an improvement in the conditions of living of the bulk of the African people," he said. And just as such circumstances tend to breed conflict, Mr. Mapuranga added, "it is also true that the seed of democracy cannot germinate, let alone thrive, in the soil of mass poverty, illiteracy, hunger and disease."

Many African speakers, but also a number from donor and creditor countries, agreed that much greater effort is needed to ease Africa's financial plight. Ambassador Khiphusizi J. Jele of South Africa, speaking for the 14-nation Southern African Development Community, called on bilateral and multilateral creditors to pursue "more vigorous and effective methods" to eliminate Africa's "unsustainable debt burden," and on donors to "rethink and reverse the decline in ODA [official development assistance] levels." ■

Security Council urges action for peace

Secretary-General's proposals on ending African conflict win broad agreement

By **Ernest Harsch**

Recognizing the need to move promptly on UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's recommendations for preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa (see page 20), the Security Council unanimously decided on 28 May to form an ad hoc working group of all Council members to prepare specific proposals for action by September 1998. The Council emphasized the urgency of the issue for Africa and the world as a whole, expressing grave concern that "the continuation of armed conflicts in the continent threatens regional peace, causes massive human displacement, suffering and poverty, perpetuates instability and diverts scarce resources from long-term development."

A comprehensive response to Africa's complex and interrelated security and development challenges is needed, the Council said, urging the General Assembly and other UN bodies, regional organizations, the international financial institutions and member states to consider Mr. Annan's recommendations and take appropriate actions of their own. It likewise agreed with his proposal to convene ministerial level sessions of the Security Council every two years, beginning this September, to assess progress in promoting peace and security in Africa.

The deep concern of UN member states with Africa's security situation was highlighted a month earlier, on 24 April, when the Council held a day-long open discussion on the Secretary-General's report. Overwhelmingly, the participants, including Security Council members and dozens of other ambassadors and permanent representatives, agreed with Mr. Annan's affirmation that, with sufficient political will from both Africa and the international community, "peace and development in Africa can be given a new momentum." These discussions, followed by Mr. Annan's 28 April-10 May tour of eight African countries (see page 17), were intended, in part, to help galvanize the necessary political will and forge agreement on priority actions.

Africa itself is keen to seriously attack the problem, asserted Zimbabwean Ambassador Machivenyika Tobias Mapuranga, speaking on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). "Africa will not be found wanting in political will and commitment to seize the opportunities that may be presented, for...the development and welfare of Africa are primarily the responsibility of the Africans themselves," he said. An essential element in that commitment, added Uganda Ambassador Semakula Kiwanuka, has been the emergence in Africa of "a new political leadership that is championing democracy, human rights and good governance."

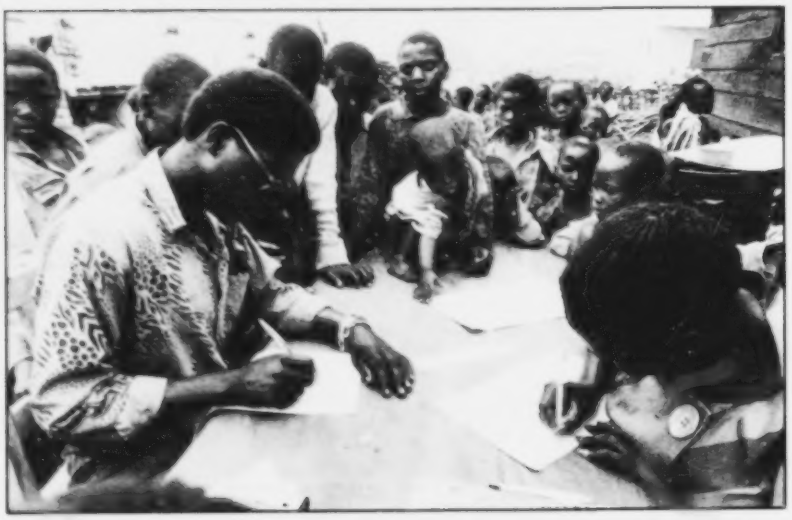
> **"The development and welfare of Africa are primarily the responsibility of the Africans themselves."**
>
> **— Machivenyika Tobias Mapuranga Zimbabwe's Ambassador to the UN**

External support needed

The ambassadors of Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and several other African countries nevertheless noted the serious constraints of resources and capacities confronting African peace efforts. "Africa alone does not have the answers," said Tanzanian Ambassador Daudi N. Mwakawago. They urged the more developed countries to support Africa's initiatives, in particular the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

A number of the Security Council's permanent members, including the US, UK, and France, agreed on the need for greater support for African peacekeeping and conflict-resolution efforts. Ambassador Bill Richardson reported that the US has over the past several years contributed more than $10 mn for the OAU's crisis management centre in Addis Ababa and for training and equipping a 100-man rapid deployment observation force. France announced that this year it will spend $40 mn on strengthening African peacekeeping capacities.

Acknowledging that the Security Council had not acted quickly enough to head off previous crises, including in Sierra Leone and Congo-Brazzaville, the UK's Permanent Representative, Sir John Weston, emphasized: "Fear of the financial costs of intervention cannot be allowed to become our guiding principle.... Intervention can be difficult and dangerous, but it can often be unavoidable if we are to prevent humanitarian catastrophes and the insidious spread of instability."



Registering Rwandese orphans at a refugee camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Due to conflict, Africa has the highest number and proportion of refugees in the world.

Controlling arms flows

Many delegates voiced strong agreement with the Secretary-General's proposals to control the illicit flow of arms into conflict areas. Among other measures, Mr. Annan had recommended national legislation to criminalize violations of Security Council arms embargoes, the compilation and publication of information on arms traffickers, and greater African participation in the UN Register of Conventional Arms (only seven African countries currently do so).

Africa. That speech struck a resonant chord throughout Africa, but some leaders remain wary of this approach to human rights and of other aspects of Mr. Annan's innovations.

That Mr. Annan can so publicly ask the continent to do better is reflective of Africa's increasing self-confidence. A new generation of leaders — epitomized by President Nelson Mandela of South Africa — has taken political and economic charge of their countries with an optimism and assertiveness that Africa last saw in the immediate post-independence period. In what many refer to as an "African renaissance" — a phrase popularized in particular by South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki — political pluralism has become an unstoppable force, and after 15 years of a catastrophic economic decline, economic growth rates since the mid-1990s have averaged over 4 per cent a year, with 11 countries in 1997 recording GDP growth at a remarkable 6 per cent or more.

The "renaissance" is certainly not all-encompassing; it is frequently fitful, with crises cropping up even within countries considered as part of the African revival. The recent outbreak of hostilities between the close allies Eritrea and Ethiopia and the renewed military conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, after the initial period of post-Mobutu euphoria, are tragic cases in point.

Despite these setbacks, Africans on the whole continue to be — for the first time in two decades — hopeful about their long-term prospects. This self-confidence has been infectious, with a renewed sense of optimism about Africa spreading abroad. President Bill Clinton's 12-day, six-country journey through the continent earlier this year — unprecedented for a US president — graphically illustrated this new excitement about the continent.

It is a happy coincidence that at a time when many Africans are very openly reassessing and reformulating their policies, approaches and relations with a fast-globalizing world, they have at the UN an African Secretary-General who can offer advice and guidance, as well as strengthened UN support, without creating the resentment which such counsel from a non-African could provoke. ■

Annan in Africa says justice necessary to heal wounds

By ***Peter Mwaura***

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan carried his message of peace, healing and reconciliation to the heart of Africa from 28 April to 10 May. During this visit to eastern and central Africa, he underscored the importance of home-grown solutions to Africa's problems and cited the indispensible role of regional cooperation in solving conflicts and the role national and multilateral juridical systems must play in bringing about reconciliations.

Mr. Annan pledged UN support for the efforts of the leaders in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in facilitating peace talks to end the deadly conflicts in Sudan and Somalia.

Mr. Annan shaking hands with Rwanda Vice-President Paul Kagame. Looking on are President Pasteur Bizimungu (right) and Foreign Minister Anastase Gasana (far left). The person in the centre was not identified.

"The UN is supporting the efforts of IGAD and, at the same time, will be prepared to provide any assistance that IGAD deems necessary," Mr. Annan told a press conference in Nairobi. "And I have encouraged all the governments in the region to work with IGAD."

During the eight-nation trip, which took him to Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Eritrea, he emphasized a key message in his report *The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa:* only Africa can determine solutions to its current conflicts.

In the Great Lakes region he highlighted questions of peace and security. In Rwanda, the scene of the horrendous genocide in 1994 in which between 500,000 and one million Tutsi and moderate Hutu were butchered, Mr. Annan addressed the country's National Assembly. "Our commitment to your future begins with the pursuit of justice," he said, referring to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, based in Arusha, Tanzania, which he had just visited. "Justice must serve a larger purpose, that of closing wounds, of coexistence and of trust between the Hutu and Tutsi communities of Rwanda."

"But to be complete," he said, "justice must be carried out with due process and above reproach, so that it can promote the process of healing that is so vital to Rwanda's future."

In an address to the parliament in Burundi, Mr. Annan called for national reconciliation and an end to impunity for those accused of atrocities, and urged the warring parties to end nearly five years of violence. Violence and inter-ethnic fighting in Burundi have killed more than 200,000 people and produced nearly a million refugees and internally displaced persons since 1993.

The culture of impunity, Mr. Annan said, must stop. "And for it to stop, you need an effective and impartial judicial system that renders justice — not in a spirit of revenge, but with respect for the law and international norms."

In Uganda the Secretary-General also spoke out on the issues of refugees and security. He raised with President Yoweri Museveni the issue of what he called "armies of losers" — defeated soldiers who crossed borders with their weapons after losing a war, creating havoc wherever they went. He also called for the establishment of a multinational intervention mechanism to separate combatants from refugees, as the meeting noted that in some cases, refugees are the cause of conflict rather than the result — a fact which has led to increased instability in the Great Lakes.

Another issue that Mr. Annan discussed with African leaders was peacekeeping operations. He told diplomats in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, that the UN and the OAU planned to enhance Africa's peacekeeping capacity — a subject that he had discussed earlier with the OAU Secretary-General. Mr. Annan said this called for closer working relations with African governments to determine what was needed to put in place the envisaged peacekeeping forces.

Annan

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Algeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, beyond Africa, Iraq show.

In Algeria's case, the unrelenting brutality of the violence has seen a horrified world wanting to assist in halting the carnage, but the Algerian authorities had been reluctant to allow an external involvement. However, even though President Liamine Zeroual did not accept Mr. Annan's idea when they first discussed it at the OAU Summit in Harare in June 1997, the Secretary-General continued to indicate to the Algerian authorities the potential advantages of UN involvement, both internally and internationally — and eventually the government agreed.

"Our country has decided to welcome the UN mission in full sovereignty, after consultations with the Secretary-General of the UN, the Arab League and the OAU," Algerian Minister of Communication and Culture Hamraoui Habib Chawki explained as he welcomed the United Nations panel.

When it left the country on 4 August, the panel expressed gratitude for the cooperation it received from all concerned. The panel in conducting its business visited two massacre sites and families of the disappeared, as well as meeting with religious leaders, the media, opposition figures and other representatives of civil society and, of course, senior government officials, including President Zeroual. It also visited a prison. The panel was also able to receive and respond to telephone calls, faxes and letters from members of the public. It did not, however, meet with representatives of the banned Islamic party.

There is plenty of potential for such involvement to go awry and attract criticism from a number of interested parties. In Nigeria, for example, some groups questioned, after Mr. Abiola's sudden death from an apparent heart attack, the Secretary-General's involvement in the purported terms of Mr. Abiola's planned release.

Some remain wary, but a number of African leaders and the continent's people have warmed to Mr. Annan's initiatives to resolve internal conflicts and repair frayed international ties.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the ultimately unsuccessful human rights investigation which Mr. Annan had proposed in a carefully worked out compromise was criticized by a number of human rights groups. And beyond Africa, Mr. Annan's February intervention in Iraq, which averted a war which had all but started, also came in for criticism from sections of the US public.

It is too early, therefore, to say how Mr. Annan's desire to make the United Nations a more central player in support of African renewal will ultimately fare. At the moment, however, a number of African leaders — and much more emphatically, the continent's people — have warmed to Mr. Annan's overtures, recognizing the vital force the UN can be in not only assisting countries to peacefully settle their internal political crises, but also in providing a bridge for mediating African and international concerns.

"The world needs to understand Africa better, be more sympathetic to what is the most disadvantaged region in the world, a region which alone continued to suffer external ravages even as late as the 1950s, and in some cases through the 1970s," Mr. Annan told *Africa Recovery*. "At the same time, in a world where no country can afford to opt out from the process of globalization under way, Africa must do better. It must even more forcefully take charge of formulating its own responses to the challenges and opportunities that abound, and it must also explain itself better. The United Nations can be a useful partner in this endeavour."

That in fact was the message of Mr. Annan's April report on Africa to the Security Council (see pages 18-21), which is widely regarded as one of the most candid and far-reaching official documents ever produced by a UN Secretary-General. In examining in the report the sensitive questions of governance, democratic freedoms and human rights, the Secretary-General decried authoritarian rule, ethnically-driven politics, corruption and mismanagement of resources, and the role some states play "in supporting and sometimes even instigating conflicts in neighbouring countries." Nor did he spare external policies, pressures and interventions which play an enormous role in perpetuating African crises.

This critical analysis was carefully placed in the context of the quite remarkable turn-around on the continent, with the Secretary-General hailing Africa's recent successful efforts to overcome its crippling colonial and post-colonial legacies. Having come so far, Mr. Annan asserted in his report, Africans must take a more self-critical look at their own role in perpetuating the crises that debilitate the region.

The risks inherent in this approach were highlighted during his May visit to Rwanda, when this particular dimension of the report's message caused his Rwandan hosts to publicly take issue with Mr. Annan. In a speech to the Parliament in Kigali, the Secretary-General had condemned the 1994 genocide and the unspeakable anguish it had caused Rwandans — but he triggered anger by asking the country to also look inward for some of the causes of the horrifying tragedy.

The same was somewhat true of his 1997 speech at the OAU summit in Harare, in which he categorically challenged the notion that human rights were a foreign imposition on

Members of the United Nations fact finding mission which visited Algeria from 22 July to 4 August, with Secretary-General Kofi Annan. From left to right: *I.K. Gujral*, former Prime Minister of India; *Donald McHenry*, former US Ambassador to the UN; *Abdel Karim Kabariti*, former Prime Minister of Jordan; Mr. *Annan*; *†Mario Soares*, former President of Portugal and Chairman of the group; *Simone Veil*, former Secretary of State of France; and *Amos Wako*, Attorney General of Kenya.

getting debt reduction in 2001.

Debt lobbyists, including Eurodad and Oxfam, are calling for "earlier and deeper" debt reduction based on revised criteria for eligibility. They want the "narrow focus on trade-related measurements" broadened to include poverty reduction and human development criteria in the initial analysis of debt sustainability. Eligibility for HIPC relief should also be "de-linked" from compliance with the ESAF programmes of the IMF. Citing an IMF internal review of ESAF, Eurodad says that since 1986, only a quarter of IMF adjustment programmes have been completed successfully. Therefore, the six-year HIPC time-frame could easily become longer for potential HIPC candidates, Eurodad points out.

The Mozambique deal

In the largest and most complicated HIPC deal so far, Mozambique's debt will fall from $5.6 bn at the end of 1996 to $1.1 bn in June 1999 in net present value (NPV), which is the sum of all future payments of interest and principal on existing debt, discounted at the market interest rate. Similarly, the debt-to-exports ratio falls from a staggering 708 per cent in 1997 to just under 200 per cent. The "sustainable" ratio for eligible HIPCs is 200-250 per cent, and 20-25 per cent for debt-service to exports, ratios which campaigners argue should be lower. They point out that the 1953 London Agreement imposed a maximum debt-service ratio of 5 per cent on post-Hitler and post-Marshall Plan Germany.

Russia — Mozambique's largest creditor, at $2.5 bn — will write off about $2 bn. Bilateral creditors, applying standard Naples terms, are to cut another $1.1 bn. These deals would lower obligations to a still unmanageable $2.5 bn, or 466 per cent of exports. The actual HIPC deal worth $1.4 bn would then cut the NPV debt-to-export ratio to 200 per cent.

Mozambique's deal required strenuous efforts, by the World Bank in particular, to bring the most reluctant bilateral creditors on board. Russia took years to settle on a realistic figure for its claims on Mozambique, most of which were built up during the Cold War at unrealistic exchange rates. The fact that bilateral lenders accounted for $4.8 bn of Mozambique's $5.6 bn total foreign debt also posed problems.

The HIPC burden-sharing guidelines required bilateral creditors to put up $916 mn of the $1.4 bn contribution. This exceeded the Paris Club's 80 per cent ceiling on debt relief by some $286 mn. After much argument, the Paris Club agreed to go beyond this limit, but only by setting up a special aid package worth $170 mn to cover part of the balance. Other bilateral and multilateral creditors then agreed to cover the additional $116 mn through individual, voluntary contributions, aid sources say.

But the whole process was so protracted that debt lobbyists are calling for greater flexibility from Russia and the Paris Club for similar cases in future. Oxfam estimates that the Paris Club will need to go beyond 80 per cent in at least five other cases: Madagascar, Nicaragua, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe and Guinea-Bissau. The latter will also require a special deal with Russia, as will Ethiopia and Tanzania, Oxfam says. ■

Jubilee 2000 debt relief campaign targets G-8 leaders

By ***Carol Collins****

On 16 May, nearly 70,000 people formed a human chain some 10 kilometres long around a conference centre in Birmingham, England, demanding that the world's richest nations provide deeper and faster debt relief to the world's poorest countries (most of them in Africa) by the end of the year 2000.

The leaders of the Group of Eight major industrialized countries (G-8) were not in the conference centre at the time, but they got the message of the mass action organized by the British chapter of the Jubilee 2000 international coalition. Participants came from many of the approximately 40 national campaigns (including the US, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Ireland, Scotland, Italy, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda).

Jubilee 2000 petitions bearing 1.5 mn signatures from some 65 countries were received by UK Cooperation Minister Claire Short on behalf of G-8 leaders, and summit president, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, met with Jubilee 2000/UK leaders and issued a statement on behalf of the G-8.

But campaigners expressed disappointment at the statement and also criticized the G-8's final communique for falling far short of the terms of the Mauritius Mandate proposed by UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown at the 1997 Commonwealth finance ministers meeting. This calls for substantial debt reduction by the end of 2000 for three-quarters of the 41 Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) on the World Bank list, of which 33 are in sub-Saharan Africa. This region's external debt of $227 bn in 1996 represented $379 for every man, woman and child, says Jubilee 2000/UK. Germany — backed by Italy, Japan and the US — reportedly led opposition in the G-8 to UK proposals for deeper debt relief. Launched barely two years ago, Jubilee 2000 is an international coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), churches and trade unions, other organizations and individuals. Its campaign in Africa was launched at a 17-20 April conference in Accra, Ghana. Jubilee 2000 is working to produce the largest petition in history — over 22 mn signatures — by the end of the year 2000. The petition stresses creditors' shared responsibility with debtors for building up unsustainable debt and for corruption. It calls for cancellation of unrepayable debt, a fair and transparent debt negotiation process, the redirection of savings from debt relief to benefit poor people in debtor countries, and a civil society role in determining the conditions for debt relief and repayment.

Major international Catholic agencies have called for deeper debt relief, and the World Council of Churches is expected to voice strong support for debt relief and the Jubilee 2000 campaign at its December 1998 World Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Other campaigns are focusing on debt-reduction for specific countries (for example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo — ex-Zaire — given the "odious" nature of its debt; and Rwanda, given its recent emergence from genocide). In mid-May, South African NGOs met in Mainz with representatives of German and Swiss church groups and Jubilee 2000 to explore a possible campaign for cancellation of Southern African debt caused by apartheid.

Jubilee 2000/UK and other groups have also issued major reports arguing that the HIPC initiative provides too little relief too late to too few countries. "Chains Around Africa," a Jubilee 2000/UK study of the debt burdens of 20 sub-Saharan African countries, notes that the region's debt service payments of $14.5 bn in 1996 were the highest since 1990. The human impact, Jubilee 2000 argues, has been severe, with some African countries now spending at least twice as much on debt service as on health care. Jubilee 2000 says that for every $1 Africa got in aid grants in 1996, it paid out $1.31 in debt service. And while Africa earns 5 per cent of the developing world's income, it owes 11 per cent of developing country debt.

**Carole J.L. Collins is national coordinator of the Jubilee 2000 Campaign in the U.S.*

Debt reduction

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earnings, aid and capital inflows." The Initiative will be reviewed later this year.

Partly in response to the pressure, the Group of Eight major industrialized countries (G-8) at their mid-May summit meeting in Birmingham, UK, recommended "speedy and determined extension of [HIPC] debt relief to more countries." Also in Birmingham were many thousands of protesters mobilized by Jubilee 2000, an international coalition of mainly non-governmental organizations (NGOs), calling for debt cancellation by the end of the millennium (see page 15).

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan had called earlier for broader access to HIPC relief. And just before the G-8 summit, UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy urged G-8 leaders to revise the HIPC scope and timetable, adding that "the year 2000 should signal a new start."

Also prior to the summit, Oxfam announced that it had written to Mr. Annan urging him to commission a special study on the effects of debt on children. Claiming that Africa spends five times more on debt than on basic health, Oxfam argued that "debt is costing children their opportunities for education and their lives." Oxfam said that Germany, Japan, Italy and the IMF "have collectively sought to delay and diminish" HIPC debt relief. It said they should look at the consistency of their policies on debt relief with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and urged the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to press that demand.

Debt profiles of first African countries qualifying for HIPC deals

Country	Total external debt ($bn) (1996)*	Debt/ exports (%) (1996)*	Total nominal debt reduction ($mn)**	% reduction in NPV † debt**
Burkina Faso	1.29	288.9	200	14
Côte d'Ivoire	19.71	383.1	800	6
Mozambique	5.84	1,079.8	2,900	57
Uganda	3.67	491.9	650	20

† Net present value of debt = the sum of all future debt-service obligations on existing debt, discounted at market interest rates.

Source: *World Bank, Global Development Finance, 1998, and **IMF data

Some disqualified

While Côte d'Ivoire and Mozambique became the latest qualifiers for eventual HIPC treatment, major creditors decided that neither Benin nor Senegal would qualify. Evaluations completed with the two governments led to a conclusion that both could reach sustainable levels of debt through existing mechanisms. These include the Naples terms set by the Paris Club of bilateral creditors which can reduce part of bilateral debt by up to 67 per cent, and aid from multilaterals for debt service repayments on multilateral loans. Creditors are looking at other countries thought likely to qualify for HIPC treatment, which raises the maximum bilateral debt relief on Naples terms from 67 to 80 per cent and also reduces multilateral debt stocks. Officials anticipate decisions on Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, and Mali later this year, and on Ethiopia and Tanzania in 1999. Subsequent candidates include Zambia, Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Madagascar.

Troubling timetable

This timetable, debt lobbyists argue, strengthens the argument for faster and more flexible HIPC treatment. Only three African countries, they point out, will see actual debt reduction by the year 2000. These are Uganda in April 1998 (when its foreign debt began to be cut by a nominal $650 mn), then Mozambique in June 1999 (by $3 bn nominally) and Burkina Faso in April 2000 (by $200 mn).

This is because HIPC guidelines require a country to complete a three-year programme under the IMF's enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF) in order to reach the "decision point" — when HIPC relief is judged necessary or not. If eligible, a country must undertake another three years of adjustment and donor supervision to reach the "completion point" — when actual debt reduction occurs.

In special cases, creditors have shortened the period between decision and completion points by giving credit for a "track record" of successful adjustment before HIPC was launched. The period for Uganda — which had a decade-long track record — was set at one year, and 15 months for Mozambique, while Côte d'Ivoire will do the full three years before

Group of 8 again pledges to help Africa

Africa was on the agenda of a 15-17 May summit of the Group of 8 (G-8) leading industrialized countries, held in Birmingham, UK, which focused on promoting sustainable global growth and tackling drugs and transnational crime. Much attention was devoted to the Asian financial crisis, but the G-8 also responded to the call by Jubilee 2000 campaigners for faster cancellation of poor countries' debt (see box, next page).

A statement from summit president and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair said the "ambition" of G-8 leaders was to "encourage all eligible countries to take the policy measures needed to embark on the [HIPC] process as soon as possible, so that all can be in the process by the year 2000." Reflecting the conditionality-laden wording of the summit's final communique, he said that if HIPC countries show "a real will to pursue policies that will relieve poverty and build a sound economy, we will do our part to contribute the funds necessary to reduce their debt burden to a sustainable level."

G-8 leaders acknowledged the importance of "substantial levels" of development aid, and pledged to negotiate a prompt and adequate replenishment of the World Bank's soft-loan International Development Association (IDA 12). Turning to the least developed countries (LDCs), G-8 leaders said they would allow additional duty-free access to LDC exports, "work towards" a proposal in 1999 to untie future aid to LDCs, and urge all creditors to cancel aid-related debt or take comparable action for "reforming" LDCs.

Referring to the UN Secretary-General's recent report on Africa, G-8 leaders agreed to consider ways to help strengthen Africa's ability to prevent and ease conflict. Among these would be the provision of more and faster aid for post-conflict countries, including through HIPC mechanisms. The summit said the World Bank should play a "strong role" in coordinating bilateral and multilateral aid for governance as well as macroeconomic programmes.

Besides supporting universal primary education and lower child and maternal mortality, the G-8 also backed the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), as well as World Health Organization efforts to cut malaria death rates by 2010. It promised to speed up feasibility work on the French proposal of a "Therapeutic Solidarity Initiative" to provide subsidized drugs for treating HIV and AIDS.

African bank secures more funds

Non-Africans get veto power; soft-loan facility back in action

By **Patrick Smith**
Abidjan

African governments are looking for at least a $3 bn replenishment of the African Development Bank's soft-loan fund in negotiations with financing institutions. This follows tortuous negotiations at the ADB's 27-29 May annual meeting in Abidjan of a 35 per cent capital increase (about $7 bn) for the bank and new voting rules on its board favouring the non-regional (predominantly Western) shareholders. After late objections from Nigeria and Libya had been overcome, the non-regionals backed the capital increase, took an extra 7 per cent stake in the bank and won a veto on executive board decisions.

Bank President Omar Kabbaj, former deputy finance minister of Morocco, argued for the new deal — cutting the African stake from 66 to 60 per cent and increasing the non-regional stake to 40 per cent — as an acceptance of "financial reality." The critical point, Mr. Kabbaj told *Africa Recovery*, was to reinforce the bank's conservative financial management. The key measure of this — the bank's capital-adequacy ratios — would improve further under the increase: the percentage of debt to usable capital is to fall from 78.1 per cent before the capital increase, to 55.7 per cent after it.

The critical issue for Mr. Kabbaj since he took over in 1995 has been to reestablish the ADB's financial credibility through a tough reform programme. That year, the bank introduced new credit rules which disqualify 39 of Africa's 53 countries from borrowing on the ADB's quasi-commercial terms, except for very specific projects with a proven commercial return. Because of their low per capita incomes and indebtedness, these 39 countries can borrow only from the concessional African Development Fund (ADF), and few are likely to qualify soon to borrow from the ADB proper.

With the new credit rules and a much tougher policy on arrears, together with a massive management shake-out that saw most senior staff replaced, Mr. Kabbaj's team has been able to persuade the financial markets that they now preside over a "born-again" commercially sound development bank. But he still has a major political problem: to convince the 39 governments barred from borrowing from the bank that the ADB group is still relevant to Africa.

The most effective way for Mr. Kabbaj to do that would be a rapid expansion of the operations of the soft-loan ADF. "My wish is that we maintain the level of funding [some $3 bn over two and a half years] achieved in the seventh replenishment (ADF-7)," said Mr. Kabbaj, adding that it is too early to speak of precise figures or the bank group's negotiating strategy.

He expects negotiations to proceed much faster than the protracted ones over ADF-7, since the major issues of governance reform in the bank group — which caused a four-year delay in ADF operations — have been addressed by the management over the past two and half years. He predicts the negotiations for ADF-8 could be completed before the end of the year — by which time ADF-7 resources should have run out at current disbursement rates.

ADB President Omar Kabbaj: To raise capital, "financial reality" means giving non-Africans bigger say.

Following Botswana's and South Africa's contributions to ADF-7, there is likely to be pressure on some of the other wealthier African states — such as Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia — to contribute to ADF-8. Nigeria, whose $40 bn gross domestic product ranks fourth after South Africa, Egypt and Algeria, has its own plans to reform the $260 mn Nigeria Trust Fund, which forms part of the ADB group and has made just one loan in the past two years.

For the 39 countries ineligible for loans from the main ADB, the ADF's concessional loans have assumed a key role for development planners. During 1990-96, the ADF provided an average of 8 per cent of all multilateral aid to Africa, a figure expected to rise even higher following the Bank group's reforms.

In what was its first full year of operations since 1993, the ADF approved new loans of $1.1 bn in 1997. Almost 70 per cent of the loans were for projects — mainly in agriculture, health and education. The lending also included an emergency assistance programme in Madagascar.

Most non-regional shareholders have fully backed last year's revival of the ADF. "The new management at the bank has succeeded in reestablishing the credibility of the fund at a time when donors have become much more skeptical about the value of multilateral aid efforts," one of them said. Others said the $3 bn target for ADF-8 is a realistic starting point. They pointed out that, in effect, the ADF is competing with the replenishment of the World Bank's soft-loan IDA facility. There is also the increasing tendency for bilateral aid to be targeted to promoting private sector initiatives — even in infrastructure projects in such areas as telecommunications and electric power generation. "Donors will ask what value-added does the African fund contribute," one non-regional official argued.

Another said it is too early to comment on non-regional support for a $3 bn replenishment. The agreement on the bank's capital increase and new voting procedures signals a "new stage in the partnership" between the non-regional shareholders and African governments. He added that while the core governance issues at the ADB and ADF had been addressed, negotiations would focus on the operational efficiency of the ADF, its effectiveness in reducing poverty, and its ability to promote gender and environmental criteria in the projects it supports. ■

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The US-Africa bill: a new chapter?

Trade incentives limited by conditionalities and structural weaknesses

By **Mehri Madarshahi**

The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, sponsored jointly by legislators from both the Democratic and Republican parties, was introduced in the US House of Representatives in April 1997 and passed in early March 1998. The Senate is expected to take it up later this year. By emphasizing trade and investment, the act ostensibly aims to facilitate a transition from development assistance to economic self-reliance for those countries in Africa deemed to be committed to economic and political reform, market incentives and private sector growth.

The act's emphasis on "partnership" — rather than charity — is said to have been prompted by recent positive changes in Africa. These have included the resolution of major conflicts and the pursuit of macroeconomic and fiscal policies approved by the Bretton Woods institutions. In addition, there has emerged a layer of African-American and African businessmen and professionals in the US who have sought to draw greater attention to African issues.

The US act, although limited, has been embraced as a positive step by many concerned with Africa. Some, however, caution against unreasonable expectations. How, they ask, can a single act have much of an impact on the lives of sub-Saharan Africa's people, half of whom suffer from illiteracy, lack drinking water, have no health care and live on less than $1 a day?

They also argue that Africa's structural economic problems and high indebtedness are such that few countries will be able to take full advantage of the act's trade concessions or operate as equal partners with the US. Low capacity and labour productivity in the manufacturing sector, for example, prevent many African countries from competing in the global market. African textiles now account for less than 1 per cent of all textile and apparel imports into the US, but even with implementation of the act, this is projected to grow to only 3 per cent over the next decade.

Numerous conditionalities are attached to the act. Its provisions would apply to only those African governments judged to be adequately pursuing market-oriented economic policies, such as privatization of state industries, the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, and the reduction of business and commercial taxes and regulations.

Meanwhile, the US stands to gain from tapping new markets for agricultural and technological products. Currently, US exports to sub-Saharan Africa — with its vast market of about 600 million people — already exceed those to the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The return on investments also is high: according to the US Commerce Department, investments in Africa brought average returns of 31 per cent in 1996, compared with 12 per cent for Latin America, 13 per cent for Asia and 17 per cent for the Middle East.

The legislation calls for the establishment of a US-Africa free trade zone. But Africa's diversity — 53 countries with different strengths and weaknesses — is unlikely to provide a solid basis for a single trade zone. A series of bilateral agreements is more likely, and only with those countries that meet the US eligibility requirements. Some critics of the act argue that it may, in effect, further weaken the already slow process of regional economic integration in Africa. They suggest that the US should instead encourage Africa's regional and subregional institutions to advance the protracted process of economic integration and intra-regional trade.

Critics also point to the act's cautious approach to debt relief. It commits the government "to extinguish concessional debt owed to the US by the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa that are heavily indebted and pursuing bold growth-oriented policies." Given that Africa's total debt to the US ($26 bn) is relatively low, they suggest the US forgive the continent's entire debt, thus providing an example for other creditor countries.

Beyond economic considerations, political and security factors also appear to underlie the US initiative. As President Bill Clinton has observed, "A stronger, stable, prosperous Africa will be a better partner for security and peace, will join us in the fight against new common threats of drug trafficking, international crime, terrorism, the spread of disease, [and] environmental degradation. We need partners in Africa on every single one of these issues...." ■

Provisions of US-Africa trade bill

The African Growth and Opportunity Act was adopted in March 1998 in the US House of Representatives by a vote of 233 to 186, but must also be approved by the Senate later this year before entering into US law. It focuses overwhelmingly on US trade and investment policies toward Africa, on the premise that "sustained economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa depends in large measure upon the development of a receptive environment for trade and investment." Among other provisions, the bill would extend the range of African products permitted to enter the US market under the tariff concessions of the US General System of Preferences. It would also eliminate tariff quotas on textile and apparel imports into the US, which would directly benefit Kenya and Mauritius, the only sub-Sanaran countries able to export in sufficient quantities to even reach the quota levels. The act notes that textile and apparel imports from sub-Saharan Africa to the US amounted to less than 1 per cent of the $45.9 bn in such imports in 1996, and that given Africa's limited manufacturing capacity, the level is not expected to exceed 3 per cent in any year over the decade after the act's adoption.

On investment policies, the bill calls for the creation of a $150 mn equity fund to support US investments in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as a $500 mn infrastructure fund, supported by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, to promote investments in private infrastructure projects, including in privatized state enterprises.

African countries are deemed eligible for support under the act's provisions if, among other requirements, they promote the free movement of goods, services and production factors between themselves and the US, treat foreign investors in the same way as national investors, reduce tariff levels within the rules of the World Trade Organization, and encourage "the private ownership of government-controlled enterprises through divestiture programmes." Specific determinations of eligibility are to be made by the President.

The act directs the President to instruct his secretaries of the treasury, state and commerce, as well as the US trade representative, to meet with their counterparts in eligible African countries, and for the President himself to meet every two years with the heads of state of those countries.

Africa reacts to US trade bill

Leaders stress need for aid, debt relief, capacity-building

During US President Bill Clinton's 23 March to 2 April tour of Africa, the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act passed by the US House of Representatives was a frequent topic of discussion. It elicited a range of reactions, from expressions of support to criticisms of its focus, with repeated calls for complementary action on such vital issues as debt relief, continued development assistance, and measures to strengthen Africa's production and trade capacities. The following are excerpts from some of the statements:

SOUTH AFRICA: Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, in a 26 March radio interview: "Clearly the overwhelming majority of African countries continued to require development assistance.... So we have been speaking out against the reduction of aid to the African continent.... It's wrong, it doesn't help.

"But also, of course, it's important to open up the markets of the developed world, to the products that come from these poor African countries....and not try and treat them as though a country like the United States can enter into an equal bargaining posture with Burkina Faso. They are two unequal entities....

"So trade, yes, but with particular focus on a framework which says trade and development.... You've got to work very hard...on the matter of attracting investment into the African continent, so that you're not just talking about opening up of markets, including the African markets, to products from sophisticated economies, but you're also increasing the capacity of the African economies to produce something that they can export, other than raw materials."

President Nelson Mandela, at a 27 March press conference with President Clinton, in response to a question about the US bill: "This matter has been fully discussed between President Clinton and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki. And I faithfully endorse the point of view that was placed before the President by the Deputy President.... This is a matter over which we have serious reservations, this legislation. To us, it is not acceptable."

GHANA: President Jerry Rawlings, welcoming President Clinton on 24 March: "This continent is ready and able to do business in today's liberalized and competitive market place.... Globalization has become a factor of our time. However, some aspects of the present international economic order tend to obstruct our efforts and have led to the increasing marginalization of many of our countries from the opportunities for growth and development.

"It is my hope that your new initiatives will offer sub-Saharan Africa a real chance to be integrated into the world economy, to share in the benefits of growth through trade and investment. It is also my hope that through your leadership, the rest of the Group of Seven industrialized nations will work in partnership with the developing countries to enhance the opportunities which will enable our countries to sustain the momentum of economic reforms."

> **"We have been speaking out against the reduction in aid to the African continent."**
>
> **— Thabo Mbeki**
> **Deputy President of South Africa**

SENEGAL: President Abdou Diouf, at a 2 April ceremony with President Clinton: "I would like to emphasize your concrete commitment to help Africa to move toward a more stable, prosperous and democratic future.... The United States' commitment with Africa, which translates into an increase...in aid in 1998, is a source of hope and encouragement to African governments. The confidence that we see here is the best way to free Africa's 'sleeping potential'; the awakening of that potential will bring Africa into an era of growth, progress and prosperity. Why not dream that the solidarity you are displaying with us will give birth to what I would gladly call a 'Clinton Plan'? You have the heart for it, and your country has the means."

ENTEBBE SUMMIT: Following a summit meeting in Entebbe, Uganda, on 25 March, a joint declaration of principles was signed by President Clinton, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya, President Pasteur Bizimungu of Rwanda, President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, President Laurent Désiré Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia:

"The Heads of State and Government affirm the African Growth and Opportunity Act as a major step forward in US-African economic relations, but acknowledge that this effort to provide greater market access for African goods must be complemented by efforts to increase African capacity to diversify economies and produce exportable goods....

"In recognition of the African desire for increased self-sufficiency and the dangers of aid dependency, the Heads of State and Government agree that an accelerated effort should be made to use foreign assistance as a tool for the enhancement of trade, investment and capital formation, as well as for sustainable economic development.

"The Heads of State and Government recognize the continuing obstacle that the debt burden poses to Africa's economic transformation, and reaffirm their collective determination to fully implement innovative approaches to the management and lessening of the debt burden." ■

A warm welcome for President Clinton in South Africa, but also frank words from President Nelson Mandela.

Clinton tour shows Africa's 'new face'

Peace, trade and investment top US agenda

Africa's need for peace, increased foreign investment and improved access to world markets were the key themes sounded during US President Bill Clinton's six-nation tour of Africa from 23 March to 2 April. It was the first major visit to the continent by a sitting US President in 20 years, and the longest ever. As such, it drew considerable international media attention to Africa, with much of the coverage highlighting the relative economic and political successes of recent years, in contrast to the common media images of famine, conflict and decline.

"Africans are being stirred by new hopes for democracy and peace and prosperity," President Clinton affirmed during his first stop, in Ghana. What is happening on the continent, he said, is "the beginning of a new African renaissance," and he hoped that his trip would help show the people of the US "the new face of Africa."

For peace and prosperity: Seven heads of state sign a joint declaration of principles at the conclusion of the 25 March 1998 summit in Entebbe, Uganda. Signing, from left to right, are: Pasteur Bizimungu, President of Rwanda; Laurent Désiré Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo; Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia; Bill Clinton, President of the US; Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda; Daniel arap Moi, President of Kenya; and Benjamin Mkapa, President of Tanzania.

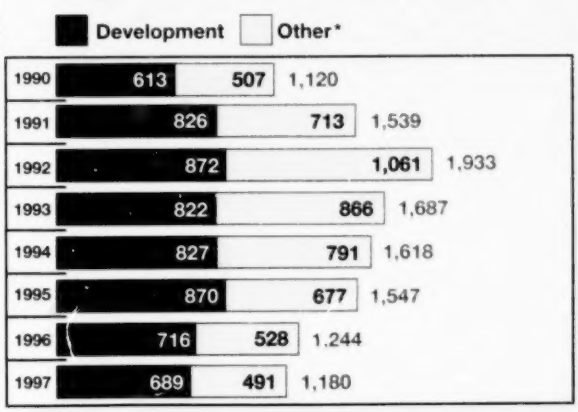
Throughout the tour, which also included Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa, Botswana and Senegal, Mr. Clinton showcased the new "African Growth and Opportunity Act," which was passed by the US House of Representatives a few weeks before the start of the trip and will be taken up by the Senate later this year (see page 12). Within the US, critics of the bill, including some non-governmental organizations and African-American political figures, have proposed amendments to soften the conditionalities that it requires of African countries.

The act's emphasis on improved trade and investment ties between the US and Africa reflects a trend that already has been increasing in recent years. Since 1994, US trade with sub-Saharan Africa has grown an average of 16.9 per cent annually. In 1997 the US sold $6.2 bn worth of goods to Africa, while imports from the continent reached $16.4 bn — although 70 per cent of this was crude oil, from just a few countries. In 1996, US direct investment in sub-Saharan Africa totaled $4.9 bn, an increase of 30 per cent from 1994.

The African leaders who met with President Clinton generally welcomed the possibility that a greater range of African exports might be able to enter US markets in the future. Some expressed skepticism, however, over the act's limited scope, pointing out that Africa's economic recovery will also require more substantial international action to alleviate the continent's crushing debt burden and to reverse the downturn in official development assistance (see next page).

Some of these concerns were reflected in a joint declaration of principles signed by President Clinton and six African presidents following a summit meeting in Entebbe, Uganda, on 25 March. In addition, the declaration stressed the importance of democracy, human rights, the resolution of conflict, and greater regional coordination to prevent another genocide, such as the one that occurred in Rwanda in 1994. Recognizing that regional stability depends on the sustainability of African democratization, the leaders endorsed "the core principles of inclusion, the rule of law, respect for human rights, the equality of all men and women, and the right of citizens to regularly elect their leaders freely and to participate fully in the decision-making which affects them." ■

US aid to Africa, 1990-97 ($ mn)



* *Includes food aid, disaster assistance and economic support funds.*

Source: UN Africa Recovery from US Agency for International Development data

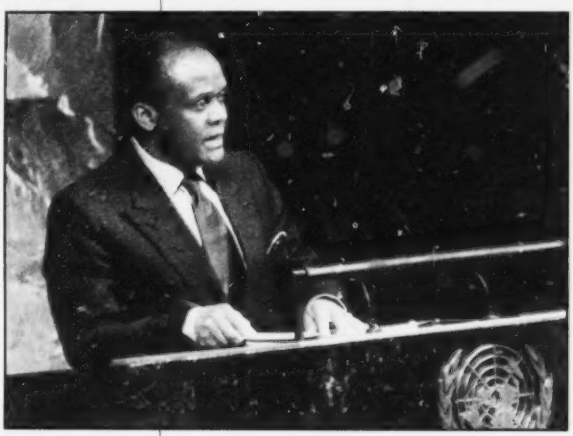
impunity provoked external pressure against the Nigerian government. In 1994 the US government charged that its anti-drug efforts were unsatisfactory. Subsequently, General Musa Bamaiyi was appointed as chief of the National Drug Law Enforcement Administration (NDLEA). Since then the general has conducted an unprecedented war — losing 29 NDLEA agents in the past two years — against drug dealers, while also trying to limit money laundering. Although this high-profile campaign has won Nigeria grudging respect for its commitment, there remains much to be done as Nigerian drug gangs continue to persist as a major global force.

"Nigerian authorities are doing a lot to strengthen their capacity to deal with this issue," commented Ms. Christiane D'Almeida, the African regional representative of the UNDCP. "And what we have observed recently is that the work done by the NDLEA has really paid off. Now you have very few arrests of Nigerians in their country. But you have an increase of drug seizures and arrests in neighbouring countries."

Nigeria has become a case study for the dangerous impact of drugs in Africa. It shows how a developing country must expend resources creating special anti-narcotics agencies and drug courts for the investigation and prosecution of traffickers and to retard the expansion of domestic drug abuse.

The experience of Nigeria and South Africa shows the global drug problem is now indeed an African one. At present Africa has insufficient resources to fight drug trafficking which, if permitted to go unchecked, can divert energy and resources from social and economic reconstruction. However, many governments are taking an active stance, despite limited financing.

Professor Asuni notes, "Law enforcement is being increased in a number of African countries known to be involved in trafficking, and bilateral and multilateral agreements being entered into with other relevant countries.... International conferences, both at regional and interregional levels, are being organized to share experiences and exchange ideas in order to improve efforts to combat the problem."



UN Eva Schneider

"Experience has proved that no single country can successfully control the drug menace within its boundaries," says Mr. Marsden Madoka, Kenya's Minister of State.

Corruption and drugs in Kenya

Although Kenya has established an anti-narcotics police unit and hosts one of the three offices in Africa of the UN International Drug Control Programme, drug syndicates not only use sophisticated methods but also have effectively pocketed some law enforcement agents, despite the government's determination to combat the problem. In a well-documented 1997 court proceeding, one District Officer and four policemen were sentenced to long jail terms for complicity in bringing drugs into the country.

Corruption seems to be a major part of the Kenya drug problem. In one recent case where 20 tonnes of hashish — the largest haul ever — were seized, the suspects were released for lack of evidence. Making his ruling, Mombasa Chief Magistrate, Justice Aggrey Muchelule, said the case had been "interfered with by the Mafia and riddled by police cover-up." In another case, it was revealed that 600 acres of the Mount Kenya forest reserve had been cleared for a bhang (cannabis) plantation. Administration police and forest rangers were used to guard the plantation.

The well-organized syndicates operate in the capital, Nairobi, and the seaside port city of Mombasa. Even the country's anti-drug laws, enacted in 1994, have been criticized for prescribing heavy punishment for drug abusers but leaving suppliers unscathed.

"Drug trafficking is a business of the rich and powerful. It is a network that is difficult to break," a recent forum concluded. And Mr. Samuel Limo, the Coast Provincial Commissioner, warned last month that if urgent measures are not taken to deal with the menace, Kenya, which has become a major transit point, might be transformed into a "narco state" in which the drug trade is a way of life.

Equally disturbing is the rise in drug abuse. Churches and schools have expressed concern over the "alarming increase" of drug abuse in schools. Most of the hard drugs, such as heroine and cocaine, that find their way into the communities are diverted from the shipments from Asian countries and South Africa that are headed for Europe and North America, according to the police.

"Drug abuse is a real monster and is one of the most devastating and crippling scourges facing mankind," the Provincial District Officer of Education in Nairobi, Mr. Erastus Kiungu, told a meeting of head-teachers in March. Findings of a study undertaken by the Child Welfare Association, released during the same month, revealed that one in every 15 Kenyan students is on drugs. This group primarily abuses bhang and hashish. Other studies indicate that 60 per cent of drug abusers are below 30 years of age.

Effectively tackling Kenya's growing drug problem will require more than just committed government action. It also needs greater international cooperation. As Minister of State Marsden Madoka observed at the 8-10 June UN anti-drug summit in New York: "Experience has proved that no single country can successfully control the drug menace within its boundaries."

— Catherine Mgendi

The reaction in Kenya was typical: in 1993 penalties for drug trafficking were increased to life imprisonment as well as fines of KSh1 mn ($16,700). But Kenya also illustrates the fact that after legislation, the next crucial factor is law enforcement.

Developing countries are often ill-equipped and undermanned to provide the social services for treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers that only industrialized states can afford. Thus, argue experts, the huge costs of managing a drug crisis and the serious damage it can cause to Africa demand stringent preventive measures. ■

reliable, sometimes creating the false notion that the drug problem is under control. For example, Mr. Norman Moleboge, Botswana's Police Commissioner, told *The Botswana Gazette* that anti-narcotics efforts are hampered by the inadequate capacity of the police to detect drugs, citing data indicating a downturn in seizures of heroin and cocaine.

In its annual report, the Geopolitical Drugs Watch, a non-governmental organization based in France, reported that 24 kg of cocaine had been confiscated at the Abidjan airport during a 10-month period in 1996, but those seizures "are far from representing the actual scale of trafficking activities."

UNDCP figures from Ghana were likewise judged to be suspect during the most recent reporting period: cocaine seizures rose from 7.3 kg in 1994 to 18.4 kg in 1995 before dropping to less than 1 kg in 1996. Similarly, Kenyan authorities recorded a rise to 29.0 kg in 1995 from 22.8 kg in 1995; but the decline to 15.5 kg for 1996 left more doubt among the various international narcotics control agencies.

Still, the drug problem does not arouse the same sense of urgency in the minds of most Africans as compared to people in developed countries in view of the relatively smaller size of the local drug market. In the US, for example, approximately 300 tonnes of cocaine enter the country each year. According to UNDCP, the US illicit drug industry is estimated to be worth between $75 bn and $100 bn a year and there are some 12.8 million abusers. Those monetary figures dwarf the gross domestic product (GDP) of many developing countries.

Although in global terms Africa's drug problem is insignificant, it is threatening to add another impediment to the continent's development efforts.

South Africa, Nigeria worst affected

When the issue of drugs in Africa is analyzed closely, South Africa and Nigeria appear to be in a class of their own. Their drug problem is critical. Sophisticated criminal organizations have already taken hold in South Africa and Nigeria and trafficking, money laundering and corruption are taxing law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice systems.

With its established financial markets and advanced computer networks, South Africa stands out as an ideal site for money laundering. As the wealthiest country in Africa, it offers a huge market for drugs. As a regional hub, it attracts numerous traffickers for transshipment of drugs.

Money laundering has become a serious issue for the South African government. In February 1998 Mr. George Fivas, the national commissioner of police, revealed that money laundering has been going on through government bonds, real estate, and various businesses. Moreover, such "dirty money" often means that taxable revenues — perhaps in the billions of rand — are being lost.

The South African Narcotics Bureau (SANAB) fears being overwhelmed by the expansion of criminal syndicates. One former SANAB officer commented: "Local syndicates are taking advantage of our weak criminal justice system, bribing their way out of airports and exporting large quantities of drugs." Legislation to bolster anti-drug initiatives was passed in 1992 with the Drugs and Drug Trafficking Act. But drug-related crime continues on an upward swing in major South African cities, showing the inextricable link between drugs and social problems.

The history of drugs in Nigeria, as pointed out by Professor Tolani Asuni of the University of Lagos, can be traced to World War II, when returning soldiers introduced cannabis. With the escalation of drug usage in developed countries during the 1970s, West African airports were employed as transit points and Nigerians were sought as couriers.

Since the early 1980s Nigeria has earned an international reputation as a hub for trafficking in hard drugs. As the trade in heroin and cocaine is very profitable, ever larger numbers of people were attracted to it. By the 1990s the menace of drug trafficking had international, as well as national, ramifications. Nigerian syndicates alone are said to control an estimated 50 per cent of the entire illegal heroin in the world, according to the British Broadcasting Corporation. The Geopolitical Drugs Watch observed: "Nigerian networks are active all over the world and they have grabbed a respectable share of the cocaine and heroin business."

A perception that sophisticated and well-entrenched Nigerian drug lords had been operating with relative

Zambia emerges as a gateway

A decade ago, Zambia was a mere transit point for illicit drugs destined for nearby South Africa. Today, it is a gateway and distribution centre for drugs going to Europe and North America. Fueled by rapid urbanization and economic hardships, drug trafficking has increased substantially, luring some Zambians in search of quick money. The country's Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) says trafficking has multiplied more than a thousand times over the past seven years.

The country's drug problems first came into the public limelight in 1985 when some 25 prominent Zambians were detained on charges of trafficking and a tribunal was set up to investigate the charges. "It was from this tribunal that the country noticed that something had gone wrong with the economy and the people were using drugs ... to buy motor vehicles and other luxury goods," says DEC Senior Assistant Commissioner Mukutulu Sinyani.

Cannabis, grown in the country, tops the list of illicit drugs. DEC is dealing with the problem through a cannabis eradication programme and crop substitution for peasant farmers dependent on it. Other drugs that have emerged on the Zambian market include heroin, hashish, cocaine and mandrax.

Also known as methaqualone, mandrax is smuggled from the Indian sub-continent, and is such a hot commodity that it is used as a medium of exchange for goods and services. It is exchanged for groceries and other household goods in South Africa, which are then transported to Zambia.

An increasing number of Zambians are arrested for trafficking, of whom the majority of couriers are women. For example, 80 per cent of the Zambians arrested abroad in 1996 and 75 per cent of those arrested in 1997 were women.

Another problem associated with drug trafficking is money laundering. Investigations by DEC show that the high rate of bank fraud in the country is a by-product of laundering activities. In the past year, DEC has seized more than $5 mn in connection with irregular financial transactions. In January 1998 alone, DEC seized about $3 mn from one bank for involvement in money laundering. The bank has since been closed. DEC has recommended that the government should urgently enact an anti-money laundering law.

— Mildred Mulenga

Merchants of death target Africa

Countries used as springboards for international drug trafficking

By **Ronald V. Neal**

Illicit drug cultivation, processing, trafficking and abuse are on the rise in Africa. Although in global terms the problem is insignificant, it is threatening to add another impediment to the continent's development efforts. If the trend continues, Africa could be faced with a major drug crisis. While the main drugs produced in Africa are cannabis and khat, narcotic drugs, specifically heroin and cocaine, are penetrating sub-Saharan Africa, which serves principally as a transit route between Asian suppliers and Western consumers.

Women at a rally in Libreville, Gabon, to mark the UN International Drug Control Programme's anti-drugs day

A study carried out by the UN International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) indicates that African countries are being used as springboards for international trafficking by criminal syndicates. The continent is also increasingly being used by the drug cartels for production and consumption of illicit drugs, as well as money laundering. A consequence of stepped-up drug activity has been a rise in violent crimes, corruption, bank fraud and social decay. African governments are grappling with how to best face this new threat.

Narcotics trade

African countries facing an influx of drugs include Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Senegal in West Africa and Ethiopia, Kenya, Botswana and Zambia in eastern and southern Africa. In South Africa, for example, there are up to 500,000 cocaine users in the country and one-third of its teenagers experiment with drugs, according to the South African Institute of International Affairs. The institute says there are up to 300 international crime syndicates, involved in drug trafficking, operating in the country. Johannesburg International Airport, which has surpassed Cairo as the busiest airport in Africa, had over 100 kg of cocaine seized in 1997.

Statistics show that cocaine is the major drug on the illicit traffic market in several African countries. In Zambia, for example, cocaine leads the drug market, and 80 per cent of it is transported to Europe and 20 per cent consumed locally, according to the country's Drug Enforcement Commission spokesman Mukutulu Sinyani.

In 1996 Africa accounted for 321,292 kg or 12 per cent of worldwide cannabis seizures, but only 169 kg or 1.6 per cent of cocaine seizures. Statistics reporting drug activity in many African countries, however, are not always consistent or

Senegal fights back

Senegal's proximity to South America and Europe and its good air and seaport links make its capital, Dakar, a most attractive transit point for illicit drugs. But the country has one of the most comprehensive anti-drug laws anywhere, though it concedes it is far from overcoming the problem. The Drug Law of 1997 covers the entire breadth of the problem — from apprehending and punishing offenders to rehabilitating abusers. Senegal also has in place a $4.39 mn Plan of Action for 1998-2000 to fight drugs, while the United Nations Drug Control Programme is training its laboratory technicians.

The threat is both external and local. Cannabis, for example, is the local drug of choice. Farmers prefer to grow the drug because it fetches 20 times more money per kilogram than groundnuts, Senegal's principal crop. And they are paid spot cash, before harvest. Increasingly, cannabis is being exported. Its preponderance in the country, however, does not exclude transshipments from Asia through Senegal or neighbouring countries. But a greater danger is the transshipment through the country of cocaine, heroine and psychotropic drugs. Cocaine comes to Senegal from Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

Cannabis abusers in Senegal are generally the poor. Children as young as 12 are increasingly smoking cannabis, according to Mr. Mamadou Fofana, the coordinator of Senegal's Inter-ministerial Committee for the War Against Drugs. A few of the abusers come from the upper social bracket, who take cocaine, heroine and crack. Only they can afford the high cost of such narcotics.

Senegal has no drug addiction treatment centres to help victims, some of whom roam the streets. Those from rich families are hidden at home because of the social stigma associated with drug abuse. Only a few non-governmental organizations have, with limited government aid, been helping sensitize the public on the dangers of drugs. One is the Jacques Chirac Drug Sensitization and Information Centre in Thiaroye, on the outskirts of Dakar.

Despite all the drugs passing through Senegal, there is as of yet little hard evidence of money laundering in the country. But Mr. Fofana warns that the problem could become much worse.

— Olu Sarr

Africa backs UN anti-drug fight

Global narcotics menace threatens 'family' of nations

By **Ronald V. Neal**

Representatives of 25 African countries backed the UN's global anti-drug strategy at a special session of the General Assembly, held on 8-10 June 1998 in New York. They supported new initiatives from the UN International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). The drug trade can be stopped, said UNDCP Executive Director Pino Arlacchi, who outlined an ambitious plan "to create a drug-free 21st century" before the gathering of 150 member states.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan opened the meeting by stating that the world should not be rigidly categorized into zones of consumption (North America and Europe) or zones of production (South America and Asia) or transit zones (Africa) because we are a "family of nations."

This view was supported by Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, the Zimbabwean Home Affairs Minister, who said, "That some countries are centres of production while others are transit points or markets does not make any material difference in this age of globalization. Failure by the international community to cooperate fully will only enable the drug barons to effectively exploit such weaknesses to maximum advantage."

If the theme of international cooperation on drugs resonated in the presentations by the 31 heads of government addressing the General Assembly, there was nevertheless a lack of agreement about solutions to the world drug problem with developing countries often pitted against developed ones. For the latter, as principal consumers of narcotics, the paramount issue is stopping supply through police measures such as seizures, arrests and crop eradication. In the developing world the focus is typically on enhanced infrastructure assistance, rural development and poverty reduction. Such views are consistently advanced in Africa, where the Organization of African Unity in March 1998 adopted an African Common Position on Drug Control, underscoring the necessity of a multi-sectoral approach to the continent's drug problem.

Developing countries — whether in Africa, South America or Asia — cannot defeat the drug trade without attacking poverty, which often plays a key role in the cultivation, trafficking and abuse of narcotics. As Ugandan Ambassador Semakula Kiwanuka told the special session, "there is a symbiotic relationship between poverty and drugs.... Sustainable economic development which provides skills and jobs, which provides road communications to open up rural areas, is a necessary strategy... While we agree that law enforcement measures are absolutely necessary at every stage of the drug cycle, we put equal emphasis on alternative development programmes."

> ***"While we agree that law enforcement measures are absolutely necessary at every stage of the drug cycle, we put equal emphasis on alternative development programmes".***
>
> — Semakula Kiwanuka
> Uganda's Ambassador to the UN

While previous anti-drug approaches gave priority to crop eradication, which destroyed arable land in the process and exacerbated rural poverty, the UNDCP strategy places a premium on crop substitution, access to better health, education and social services. UNDCP is currently helping Ghana, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Nigeria and Swaziland to counteract the cultivation of cannabis, which is the most widely consumed illicit drug in Africa. Grants, rather than loans, are provided, thereby negating part of the attraction of drug money to poor farmers.

Technical assistance

African countries also are receiving technical assistance from UNDCP in the form of laboratories for the analysis of drugs that are seized. The Gambia and Namibia have benefited from such aid, which provides resources for the quality control of legal pharmaceuticals as well. Germany, according to a report on drug control and development presented at the meeting, contributed $1.5 mn to UNDCP for the development of national narcotics control laboratories in Africa during 1987-93.

Africa is neither a large-scale drug consuming nor producing region, making its situation different from that of most of the developing and developed world, several African ambassadors and ministers pointed out. African states are frequently transit sites for drug trafficking, requiring increased funding for law enforcement agencies. Indeed, representatives from Botswana, Angola and Sierra Leone called upon UNDCP to increase its support to anti-narcotics agencies, providing needed training in drug control methodologies. This assistance is important to the overall offensive against criminal drug syndicates, which rely upon porous borders and weak customs procedures to penetrate developing countries, they noted.

Although UNDCP, established by the General Assembly in 1990, is a valuable asset for anti-drug activities, it remains underfunded according to Mr. Arlacchi, with a budget of $165 mn for 1998-99, the great bulk of which is to be obtained through voluntary contributions from donor nations.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are taking part in the struggle against drugs by confronting the problem at the community level. Mr. Taye Wah Wan Chat Kwong, the Permanent Representative of Mauritius, cited the work being done at the Dr. Idrice Goomany Centre in his country, which faced a serious heroin problem among its young urban male population in 1986. By creating the Teen Hope Project, the centre was able to significantly reduce consumption, while redirecting former drug abusers into productive social life.

Similarly, in South Africa, said Dr. Solomon Rataemane, a psychiatrist, during a panel discussion on drugs and development, collaboration among community groups is important in reversing the trend toward drug abuse, crime, and unemployment in poverty-stricken areas. NGOs are instrumental in disseminating information on drug abuse to young people throughout the townships, he added.

At the end of the "drug summit," the General Assembly adopted by consensus a political declaration committing member states to measurable results in reducing the demand for drugs by 2008. The declaration urged nations to work with UNDCP to halt money-laundering operations and illicit crop cultivation. It also called for greater judicial cooperation among states in the fight against drugs. ■

Focus of investigation

No other recent conflict in Africa has taken as high a toll, in such a short period of time, as the Rwanda genocide. From April to July 1994, extremist political groups organized the massacre, directed primarily at the minority Tutsi ethnic group, but also against those from the Hutu majority who opposed the killings or had been active in the pro-democracy movement. The slaughter ended when rebel forces of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) overthrew the genocidal government. However, ongoing political tensions, guerrilla warfare and massive refugee movements have continued to sow political instability and humanitarian crises throughout the Great Lakes region, including in neighbouring Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire).

The panel's mandate is to "establish the facts about how such a grievous crime was conceived, planned and executed" and to "determine culpability for the failure to enforce the [1948 UN] Genocide Convention in Rwanda and in the Great Lakes region." This will include looking at the "deep root causes" of the Rwanda genocide, the circumstances in which it took place and its consequences throughout the region. In examining the specific events leading up to and following the massacres, the panel's main focus will be on the period from the 1993 Arusha Peace Accord between the then Rwandese government and the insurgent RPF, and the May 1997 "fall of Kinshasa". The latter reference is to the overthrow of the dictatorship of Mr. Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire by rebel forces believed to have been supported by the RPF government and other neighbouring states. The suspected alliance of some of the organizers of the Rwanda genocide with the Mobutu government and the presence in Mobutu's Zaire of hundreds of thousands of Rwandese Hutu refugees, were important factors exacerbating that conflict.

In addition, the panel is specifically mandated to assess the role of various actors before, during and after the 1994 genocide, including the UN and its agencies, the OAU, "internal and external forces," and non-state actors, as well as "the role individually and collectively, of the leaders and governments of African and non-African states."

Most of the panel's investigations will be conducted in Rwanda and in neighbouring countries, through hearing testimony, examining documentation, and carrying out other research. The seven panelists will be assisted by a group of expert advisers, as well as by a secretariat established by the OAU in Addis Ababa. A parallel group of representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with interest and expertise in Rwanda also will investigate the genocide, and their work will be made directly available to the panel.

To help finance the panel's activities, the OAU is establishing a special trust fund to receive voluntary contributions from within and outside Africa. In his speech to the Ouagadougou summit, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, as outgoing Chairman of the OAU, affirmed that the summit participants "particularly welcome the expected international support to provide resources to enable the panel to do its work."

> **"The knowledge of what went wrong and what was not done to prevent the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 is critical for us ... to prevent future occurrence of a tragedy of such magnitude."**
>
> **— Salim Ahmed Salim**
> **OAU Secretary-General**

Beyond investigating the Rwanda genocide and its surrounding events, the panel is mandated to "recommend measures aimed at redressing the consequences of the genocide and at preventing any possible recurrence of such a crime." Its findings and recommendations will be submitted to the OAU Secretary-General, hopefully within about a year, and he will in turn present the panel's report either to the OAU Council of Ministers or to the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, meeting at ministerial level.

The proposal to specifically investigate the Rwanda genocide was initially made by Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, during a November 1997 meeting in Addis Ababa of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism. That body approved the idea and asked the OAU Secretary-General to follow up as a matter of urgency. ■

The OAU panel of 'eminent personalities'

The terms of reference for the OAU panel to investigate the Rwanda genocide specified that it should be composed of seven "internationally renowned personalities with the required integrity and objectivity and with the requisite knowledge of the region," while at the same time ensuring "a significant African participation." With one more member yet to be named, its six members so far are:

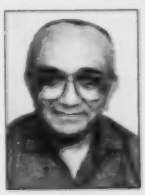
Sir Ketumile Masire, Chairman of the panel, who was president of Botswana from 1980 until his retirement in March 1998.

General Amadou Toumani Touré, head of state of Mali in 1991-92, who oversaw the country's transition to a multi-party democratic system and who has been active in conflict mediation efforts elsewhere in Africa.

Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, a former government minister and former Assistant Administrator of the UN Development Programme and Director of its Regional Bureau for Africa.

Ms. Lisbet Palme of Sweden, Chairperson of the Swedish Committee for the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), expert on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and member of the Eminent Persons Group which produced a Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children for the UN.

Justice P.N. Bhagwati of India, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India and member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague.



Ambassador Stephen Lewis, former ambassador and permanent representative of Canada to the UN and currently Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF.

OAU sets inquiry into Rwanda genocide

A determination to search for Africa's own truth

By **Ernest Harsch**

Remembering the genocide: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan being shown burial site of 1994 massacre victims in Rwanda.

The Organization of African Unity, in an unprecedented move for the regional organization, has set up a high-level investigative panel to examine the Rwanda genocide of 1994, in which between half a million and a million people were massacred. The panel is headed by Botswana's former President, Sir Ketumile Masire, and will comprise six other members, including a senior UN official, Mr. Stephen Lewis of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), (see next page). Its mandate is to inquire into the underlying causes of the mass killings, look at their consequences throughout the Great Lakes region, assess the roles and responsibilities of the various local, regional and international actors — including the UN and its agencies — and make recommendations about how to avert similar tragedies in the future. The panel's report, Organization of African Unity (OAU) Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim affirmed at the early June summit meeting of African heads of state in Ouagadougou, will help Africans draw essential lessons, "so that never again will our continent experience such a human disaster."

The OAU decision to launch the inquiry, despite the political sensitivities and passions it may touch, is a further reflection of the pan-African organization's determination to take up leadership in resolving conflicts and preventing atrocities, at a time when outside powers have become more reluctant to commit their own personnel and resources to African peacekeeping ventures. The panel's establishment "demonstrates a growing self-confidence in the OAU's capacity to give leadership to matters others don't seen to be able to give leadership to," observes panel member Stephen Lewis, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF.

The International Panel of Eminent Personalities to investigate the genocide in Rwanda and its surrounding events, as the group is known, is expected to hold its inaugural meeting in early September in Addis Ababa, headquarters of the OAU. Its members also will make a symbolic visit to Rwanda soon after, Mr. Salim said on 3 June, when the composition of the panel was announced, to "participate in a solemn ceremony in memory of the victims of the genocide."

Unlike the Rwandese courts or the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, based in Arusha, Tanzania, which are trying some of the people accused of perpetrating the genocide, the OAU panel will have no judicial role. Its purpose is strictly to investigate, and make appropriate recommendations. At the same time, the panel's investigative mandate is much broader than other recent commissions of inquiry in Belgium and France, which have examined the Rwanda events primarily from the perspectives of those countries' particular roles and national interests.

Knowledge is critical

According to the panel's terms of reference, its mandate is to establish the facts of what happened — and why — looking at the events preceding and surrounding the genocide, as well as the roles of the various actors. This, it is hoped, will help advance the search for justice and dispel the belief that perpetrators of such atrocities can escape with impunity. "The knowledge of what went wrong and what was not done to prevent the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 is critical for us," declared the OAU Secretary-General, "particularly as part of our efforts to prevent future occurrence of a tragedy of such magnitude." The urgency is even greater given the ongoing conflicts throughout much of the area, said Mr. Salim: "For the Great Lakes region, this is absolutely essential, as we continue to receive very disturbing news of the killings and massacres of innocent people by some of those who are believed to have been involved in the planning and execution of the genocide in Rwanda."

From his discussions with African leaders at the Ouagadougou summit, Mr. Lewis told *Africa Recovery*, it is evident that in looking at Rwanda, "Africans want to know how it had happened. For themselves, they want to know. They don't want others telling them how it had happened." This concern has been reflected in the panel's composition: it will have a majority of African members, and is headed by a widely respected former African president. Above all, Mr. Lewis said, the panel's work will involve a "search for truth, with all of the difficulties that truth may bring."

The OAU's decision to establish such an investigative body is an extension of the organization's growing emphasis on promoting African leadership in the prevention and resolution of the continent's numerous conflicts. As part of that focus, the OAU also has given increased attention in recent years to issues of human rights and to bringing to justice perpetrators of atrocities and gross rights violations. The organization has, for example, thrown its support behind the efforts to establish an International Criminal Court, with the authority to try those accused of crimes against humanity.

Action on African priorities in Tokyo

TICAD II will set key targets and implementation strategies

By **Peter Mwaura**

The Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), to be held on 19-21 October, is expected to adopt an Agenda for Action that will focus on issues of serious concern to Africa, including the development of infrastructure, the solution of Africa's external debt problem and support to Africa's industrial development.

TICAD II, which will provide a programme of action for Africa's development in the next millennium, is primarily sponsored by Japan and supported by the OAU. Other co-organizers of the conference include the UN and the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA).

The conference is also expected to adopt an effective and pragmatic framework for fostering cooperation between African and Asian countries, including Japan. Though without a colonial heritage in Africa, Japan spends the second largest share of its official development assistance (ODA) in the continent, amounting to more than one billion dollars a year since 1994. It is also the only country to organize a major conference on African development at the summit level.

Emphasizing the critical importance of this Asia-Africa cooperation in TICAD II, Ms. Kimiko Uno, a senior economist in the UN Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, says African countries can learn and benefit a lot from Asia. "Asian countries have developed from scratch, and whatever their ups and downs are today, they have important lessons for Africa. They also have skills and technologies that are relatively less expensive, compared to those from developed countries."

African ownership

This concern with stronger South-South cooperation is in keeping with the objectives of the first TICAD held in Tokyo in October 1993. That conference came out with the Tokyo Declaration on African Development, which stressed the need for African ownership of the continent's development process and gave a strong push for Africa-Asia cooperation. Strengthening African ownership is also a key element of UN activities in the continent, notably the UN New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. Countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development have also adopted a similar operating philosophy.

Preparation for TICAD II began with a conference held in Tokyo on 10-11 November 1997 to review the progress made since TICAD I. The meeting reached a consensus on the areas of cooperation on which the Agenda for Action will focus. These include the priority areas identified by African countries, and where targets can be set and strategies defined for implementation.

OAU Chairman and Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore will represent Africa at the Tokyo conference

Conference participants agreed that the development of the capacity of African countries to solve their own problems, and to set and implement national priorities, is critical in making development internally self-generating and sustainable.

They also said that not only traditional donors but also many rapidly growing Asian countries should play a role in Africa's development. They stated that intra-regional and inter-regional cooperation, including triangular arrangements involving African, Asian and donor countries, were important strategies in furthering African development. And while better donor coordination is essential to ensure effective use of resources, participants emphasized that recipient countries should also play a greater role in determining the use of those resources.

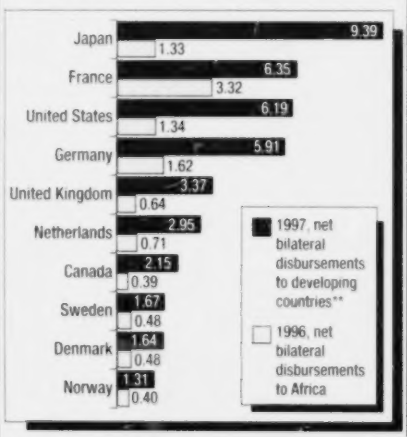
The conference set up a preparatory committee to work on the Agenda for Action. Committee members include the OAU, the African Development Bank, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Community. It also includes eight African countries, two Asian countries, and five donor countries. Japan, the UN and the GCA are also members.

The OAU has requested Japan to invite all OAU member-countries to participate in "this important event," in which 11 Asian countries, 15 donor countries and six international organizations are expected to participate. President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, the current Chairman of the OAU, is expected to represent the organization at the Tokyo conference.

The preparatory committee has held meetings in Dakar and Harare in March and June to draft the Agenda for Action. Its last meeting in Addis Ababa is scheduled for September to finalize the draft. So far the preparatory committee has endorsed the key concepts of the Agenda for Action — strengthening coordination, regional cooperation, South-South cooperation, capacity building and gender development.

Two regional workshops have also been held to provide opportunities for African countries, especially those that are not members of the Preparatory Committee, to contribute to the preparatory process. The regional workshop for West and Central Africa was held on 18-20 May in Burkina Faso, and the one for East and Southern Africa in Namibia on 15-17 June 1998. The workshops, attended by representatives of African and Asian governments, have also provided opportunities for African and Asian countries to exchange ideas and promote partnerships. ■

ODA by top 10 DAC* donors
($ bn, in current prices and exchange rates)



* *Development Assistance Committee, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development*

** *Provisional*

Source: UN Africa Recovery from OECD data

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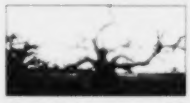

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AFRICA RECOVERY

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Annan intensifies UN involvement in African crises

MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY OFFERED IN SUPPORT OF INTERNAL, EXTERNAL RECONCILIATIONS

By **Salim Lone**

It was a startling scene: the Secretary-General of the United Nations announcing to the world from the Aso Rock Presidential compound on 2 July that Nigeria's political prisoners, including Mr. Moshood Abiola, were to be released by the new government of General Abdulsalam Abubakar. Earlier, in only a slightly less remarkable development, Mr. Kofi Annan had met with the imprisoned Mr. Abiola himself, and later with the Group of 34 opposition figures campaigning for an end to military rule in Nigeria. Soon after Mr. Annan's departure, General Abubakar pledged that elections would be held in early 1999 and power handed to a civilian president in May 1999.

United Nations watchers could not recall a precedent for such public involvement of a UN Secretary-General in the inner-most political workings of a member state. As it soon became clear, Mr. Annan's unscheduled Nigeria mission was a result of Gen. Abubakar's own initiative. But the Secretary-General's role in the release of political prisoners — a behind-the-scenes effort he initiated with the late President Abacha — in fact began soon after he became Secretary-General. So when General Abubakar took over the reins of government in June with the declared intention of ending the country's isolation from the Commonwealth and many major powers, he turned for public diplomatic support not to an influential Western government with long-standing interests in the country but to the UN.

Nigeria's new leader General Abdulsalam Abubakar meeting with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in Abuja, Nigeria.

That General Abubakar involved the UN Secretary-General in the momentous transition he was planning attests to the rising international prestige of the world body. But it was also a direct consequence of Mr. Annan's efforts to quietly but emphatically involve the UN in some of the most compelling debates and developments unfolding in his continent, with the goal of supporting Africa's burgeoning effort to overcome nearly two decades of deepening international marginalization.

Another UN breakthrough occurred a few days after Mr. Annan left Nigeria. The Algerian government welcomed on 22 July a six-person UN information gathering mission which had been constituted by the Secretary-General to look into the violence which has wrought brutal havoc in the country and also strained its relations with some international groups.

Initiatives such as these in Nigeria and Algeria have pushed the limits to which the UN has traditionally hewed in offering multilateral diplomacy as a channel which simultaneously addresses a country's internal difficulties and its frayed international ties. These efforts can yield enormous dividends for peace, but while always carefully calibrated with key UN actors, they carry considerable risks for Mr. Annan's personal standing, as the examples of Nigeria,

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Pressure grows for faster debt reduction

IMF and Bank urged to allow more countries to qualify

By **Christina Katsouris**

Washington, DC

Creditors took a step forward in March and April with agreements for Côte d'Ivoire and Mozambique to benefit from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative in 2001 and 1999 respectively. Also in April, Uganda became the first country to get actual debt reduction since the HIPC package was launched in 1996.

But international pressure has been building for faster and more flexible action in favour of more countries. In two years, only six countries have qualified for HIPC treatment — Bolivia, Guyana and Burkina Faso are the others — out of the 41 originally classified as HIPCs by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Among the 41 are 33 African countries.

Through the HIPC initiative, says the IMF, all bilateral, multilateral and commercial creditors are to "provide exceptional assistance to eligible countries following sound policies," enabling them to "service their debt through export

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Turning to the United Nations itself, Mr. Annan called for a reversal of the international community's "great reluctance in recent years to assume the political and financial exposure associated with deploying peacekeeping operations." Memories of the Somalia experience "continue to hobble" UN capacity to respond swiftly and decisively to crises; and within Africa, the lack of forceful United Nations action to stop the 1994 Rwanda genocide has had a "particularly harsh" impact, leading to the tendency of some African governments to marginalize the UN from political involvement in regional affairs. The "horrifying suffering of the Rwandese people sends the clear and unmistakable message that the international community must never again tolerate such inaction," the Secretary-General asserted.

Early, decisive actions

The Secretary-General urged member states to provide renewed and better coordinated support for early and decisive action to prevent or resolve conflict in Africa. He said UN peacekeeping could achieve much if "deployed with a credible deterrent capacity, equipped with appropriate resources, and backed by sufficient political will." Mr. Annan called for support for regional and sub-regional initiatives, and strongly encouraged UN member states to contribute to the UN and Organization of African Unity (OAU) Trust Funds for conflict prevention and peacekeeping. "Such support is necessary because the United Nations lacks the capacity, resources and expertise to address all problems that may arise in Africa," he said. "It is also desirable because wherever possible the international community should strive to complement rather than supplant African efforts to resolve Africa's problems."

He said Africa must demonstrate the political will to rely upon political rather than military responses to problems, protect democratic channels for pursuing legitimate interests and expressing dissent, and respect and legitimize political opposition. Africa must also take good governance seriously — ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law, strengthening democratization, and promoting transparent and accountable public administration. "Unless good governance is prized, Africa will not break free of the threat and the reality of conflict which are so evident today."

Mr. Annan urged governments in conflict situations to consider appointing special mediators or special commissions to build confidence and recommend practical solutions. Mr. Annan also called for the establishment of "contact groups" of interested countries or a "special conference" in conflict and post-conflict situations, as done in the case of Liberia. Sanctions should also be better targeted, since "in some cases, the hardship imposed on the civilian population is greatly disproportionate to the likely impact of the sanctions on the behaviour of the protagonists." Mr. Annan suggested the use of sanctions aimed at decision-makers and their families, including the freezing of personal and organizational assets as well as restrictions on travel.

Turning to the international community, Mr. Annan said development aid should be "restructured, focusing on high impact areas and on reducing dependency." He noted that after more than 40 years of technical assistance programmes, 90 per cent of the $12 bn a year of technical assistance is spent on non-African consultants despite the availability of African experts in many fields. In this light, Mr. Annan urged donors to make sure that "at least 50 per cent of their aid to Africa is spent in Africa."

Mr. Annan called for "new sources of funding" as well as "better use of existing resources and the enactment of trade and debt measures that will enable Africa to generate and better reinvest its own resources." He called on the Group of Eight leading industrialized countries to consider eliminating trade barriers to African products. He also called for deeper reduction of Africa's "unsustainable" external debt — $328.9 bn in 1995 — which would promote and reinforce economic reforms. Such relief should be structured "in ways that will not undermine Africa's future capacity to attract investment, but will instead enhance that capacity by lifting past burdens from present operations," the Secretary-General added.

Regional and sub-regional integration processes should be strengthened, the Secretary-General said, calling on the UN system (including the Bretton Woods institutions), along with inter-governmental organizations such as the European Union, to reinforce African countries' own efforts. He also called for "a hard look" at the important international initiatives aimed at promoting peace and development in Africa. These include the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) and its implementing component, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIA), the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), and Commitment 7 of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development. ■

Innovations in addressing African conflicts

A number of innovations that the Secretary-General has introduced in the strategic management of the United Nations have already helped improve the manner in which it has dealt with conflict and instability in Africa. Innovations that are mentioned in the report include:

- The appointment of a joint UN and Organization of African Unity (OAU) Envoy for the Great Lakes in 1997 marked a significant innovation which may also prove useful in other circumstances. The appointment of a UN Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict during the same year also institutionalized the international community's focus on the subject.
- The UN Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), the first preventive peacekeeping deployment in Africa, and only the second in the world (after the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).
- Establishment of UN Executive Committees on Peace and Security and Humanitarian Affairs to prepare and coordinate complex operations.
- Establishment of contact groups of interested countries to mobilize international support for peace efforts, as was done in Liberia.
- Co-deploying with regional, sub-regional, or multinational forces. A small unarmed force of UN military observers was deployed alongside ECOMOG, its mandate being to work with the West African force in the implementation of the peace agreement in Liberia.
- Annual meetings between officials from the UN and OAU Secretariats chaired by the two Secretaries-General and the establishment of a UN liaison office at the headquarters of the OAU in Addis Ababa to consolidate cooperation and facilitate the coordinated deployment of political efforts to prevent, contain and resolve conflicts in Africa. The UN, in the interests of coordination, also has supported Togo's mediation efforts over the Bakassi Peninsula, and the mediation efforts of former President Julius Nyerere with respect to Burundi.

United Nations peace missions in Africa

WESTERN SAHARA: When Spain announced its withdrawal from Western Sahara in 1975, Morocco (and Mauritania briefly) took over the territory. But the Polisario Front pursued an armed struggle for independence. The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic was proclaimed in February 1976 and in 1984 won the recognition of the OAU. In September 1991, a UN-brokered settlement provided for a cease-fire and a referendum to enable the population to choose between independence and integration with Morocco. The referendum is tentatively scheduled for December 1998. Under the accord, the **UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, MINURSO**, was assigned responsibility over all matters relating to ensuring a free and fair referendum, including identifying and registering eligible voters.

SIERRA LEONE: A few months after the 25 May 1997 military coup against the democratically elected President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), sent in the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Supported by the UN Security Council and the Commonwealth, ECOWAS reached an agreement with the military junta on 22 October to reinstate President Kabbah by 22 April 1998. However, the junta reneged and in February 1998 ECOMOG toppled the junta, restoring President Kabbah in March. On 13 July 1998, the UN Security Council established the **UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, UNOMSIL,** to monitor the military and security situation.

LIBERIA: Civil war in Liberia began on 24 December 1989, when rebels led by Mr. Charles Taylor took up arms against President Samuel Doe. ECOWAS intervened with a military presence, ECOMOG. President Doe was killed in 1990, but the opposition forces were divided into several warring factions and the conflict continued. ECOWAS, with the support of the UN, worked out a peace plan through a series of negotiations in Yamoussoukro, Cotonou and Abuja, and elections were held in July 1997. Mr. Taylor won the elections, which were monitored by the UN and other international observers. The war had displaced more than half the pre-war population of 2.3 million people. The **UN Peacebuilding Support Office in Liberia,** set up on 15 December 1997, is providing support for reconciliation, resettlement and reintegration.

ANGOLA: After almost 15 years of civil war between the MPLA government and UNITA and with the end of the Cold War, the first UN Angola Verification Mission, **UNAVEM,** was set up in January 1989 to monitor the withdrawal of Cuban troops. A larger mission, **UNAVEM II,** was set up in May 1991 to monitor a peace plan agreed by the warring parties in Lisbon earlier that year and to organize elections. The MPLA government won the 1992 elections, which UNITA refused to recognize, and this led to the resumption of civil war. However, after UN-brokered negotiations, the two sides signed the Lusaka Protocol in November 1994 and **UNAVEM III** was established in February 1995 to monitor the peace process. The **UN Observer Mission in Angola, MONUA,** set up in July 1997 to help consolidate national reconciliation, succeeded UNAVEM III. Currently UNITA is under Security Council sanctions imposed on 1 July 1998 for failing to implement fully the terms of the Lusaka peace plan.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Following military mutinies in 1996, the Presidents of Gabon, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali visited Bangui, at the request of President Ange-Félix Patassé, and mediated a truce — the Bangui Agreements — signed on 25 January 1997. An African force, the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Bangui Agreements, MISAB, was deployed in Bangui in February 1997 to oversee implementation. The UN Security Council welcomed MISAB. With the end of MISAB, the Security Council on 15 April 1998 formally established the **UN Mission in the Central African Republic, MINURCA,** to pursue peacekeeping and facilitate preparations for elections.

SOMALIA: After the overthrow of President Siad Barre in January 1991, rival factions began fighting for state power. The civil war quickly degenerated into anarchy, resulting in thousands of deaths and widespread threat of starvation. The country has been without a central government since then. In April 1992 the **UN Operation in Somalia, UNOSOM,** was established to facilitate humanitarian aid to people affected by war and famine. Continuing insecurity led to the setting up in December 1992 of the US-led Unified Task Force, UNITAF, to facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid. UNITAF was in turn followed by **UNOSOM II** in March 1993, which was withdrawn in March 1995 due to continuing warfare. The **UN Political Office for Somalia, UNPOS,** based in Nairobi, Kenya, was established in 1995, to monitor the situation and maintain contact with the warring parties with a view to bringing about national reconciliation.

RWANDA: In October 1990 the Tutsi-led Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) launched a military campaign against President Juvenal Habyarimana's government. After several years of negotiations, supported by the OAU and facilitated by Tanzania, a peace plan was signed on 4 August 1993. The government and RPF called for a neutral international force to facilitate implementation of the peace agreement. In October 1993 the Security Council established the **UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda, UNAMIR,** to help achieve national reconciliation, among other things, according to the terms of the Arusha Peace Agreement. But the peace efforts were torpedoed when on 6 April 1994 a plane carrying President Habyarimana and President Cyprien Ntaryamira of neighbouring Burundi was shot down on its approach to Kigali, killing the two presidents. This triggered the genocide in which between 500,000 and 1 million Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed in three months. The genocide ended when the RPF marched into Kigali and overthrew the government. With the agreement of the new RPF government, UNAMIR left in March 1996.

BURUNDI: The country was plunged into a new period of crisis when the first elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, was killed in a coup on 21 October 1993. The crisis intensified when President Cyprien Ntaryamira, returning from a regional summit in Tanzania, was killed together with President Juvenal Habyarimana of neighbouring Rwanda in the 6 April 1994 plane crash. Insecurity continued to paralyze the country and in July 1996, Major Pierre Buyoya overthrew President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya. Civil war intensified as Hutu rebels tried to oust President Buyoya's government. However, the warring parties, meeting in Arusha in June 1998 under the mediation of former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, agreed to a "suspension of hostilities" to allow for a peaceful settlement. The **UN Office in Bujumbura, UNOB,** was established in November 1993 to facilitate the restoration of constitutional rule, while a UN observer mission, established in April-May 1996, promotes human rights by gathering information on rights violations.

NOTES: Small islands not to scale
The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Small arms foster social turmoil

Illegal trafficking disrupts African communities, spreads crime

By ***Virginia Gamba***

A massive quantity of small arms is now circulating throughout Africa, moving unchecked across porous borders. This is one of the legacies of the continent's many conflicts. The origins of the small arms build-up lie in the Cold War competition and the struggles against colonialism and apartheid. More recently, as internal wars predominate, the influx of new weapons remains a preoccupation. But it is the illicit redistribution and flows of existing stocks from older conflicts which currently raise the greatest concern.

From the Maghreb to Southern Africa, thousands of illegal arms in the hands of bandits, common criminals and organized insurgents are causing widespread instability, destruction and social havoc. Although there are no accurate data on the number of weapons circulating, the problem of illegal arms clearly is enormous. For example, estimates of the number of illegal arms circulating in Mozambique range from 500,000 to 6 mn, while in South Africa they range from 400,000 to 8 mn. In November 1997 alone, 942 illicit firearms — a third of them AK-47s — and 272 explosive devices were seized by the South African police. Most came from neighbouring Mozambique and more than 70 per cent were recovered in the historically conflict-prone province of KwaZulu Natal.

Virginia Gamba heads the Small Arms Programme of the Institute for Security Studies, South Africa.

In some countries, increases in crime and local instability jeopardize post-conflict democratization programmes, with many people — especially among demobilized soldiers, refugees and other migrant and displaced communities — feeling so insecure that they acquire weapons for self-defence, thus further encouraging the illegal arms markets. Over time, the increased availability of unregulated and uncontrolled light weapons changes social values, making societies and individuals more, not less, insecure and violent.

Small arms trafficking has become one of the biggest threats to national and regional security in Africa.

Inadequate disarmament

In many countries, such uncontrollable movements of small arms have occurred because peace settlements did not provide for the collection and destruction of surplus weapons. Accumulated weapons stocks became tradable commodities and circulated freely, contributing to continuing violence after the end of war.

Without adequate disarmament, peace in Mozambique brought a massive movement of guns across borders, flowing northward to feed the conflicts in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa, and southward to supply Southern Africa's growing black markets in arms. If at first the trade in weapons involved individuals selling one weapon for food or commodities, soon weapons smuggling became an organized business. According to an October 1997 report on weapons proliferation in South Africa, single smugglers could bring in about 30 weapons from across the Mozambican border at one time and usually undertook two trips per month.

The resulting weapons proliferation has exacerbated social conflicts in South Africa, bringing an increase in cattle rustling and the bartering of guns for cattle. The South African Police Service reported that 15,923 head of stock were stolen from rural communities between July and November 1997 alone.

South Africa is not alone. Some of the most dramatic changes are occurring in traditional pastoral communities in other countries as well. Two examples demonstrate the links between small arms and cattle rustling: in the rural areas of Swaziland along its border with Mozambique, and in pastoral communities straddling Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan.

Fear among Swazi villagers

Since Mozambique's border with South Africa is more heavily monitored than that with other countries, gun trading into Swaziland has been a more serious problem. The road between Boane and Siteki, bordering Mozambique, is in an area of traditionally peaceful communities which live off their livestock. The small villages along the border customarily protected their livestock with communal support groups. Young men patrolled the cattle enclosures at night and, if a thief was found, he was beaten

Guinea-Bissau arms smuggling crackdown sparks military revolt

Within just a few days of a military revolt that began in Guinea-Bissau on 7 June, the country's capital of 300,000 was virtually deserted as much of the population fled fighting between forces loyal to President João Bernardo Vieira and those following former army chief of staff, General Ansumane Mané. The sudden eruption of violence in the West African nation demonstrated both the politically corrosive impact of arms smuggling and the spill-over effects of conflict in neighbouring countries. General Mané had been dismissed in late January and more than a dozen other military personnel were arrested following allegations they had been involved in the illegal trafficking of small arms, especially landmines, into the southern region of neighbouring Senegal.

Throughout this decade, a war has been under way in Senegal's Casamance region, pitting government forces against separatist rebels, who have been most active in the heavily forested regions along the border and have benefitted from clandestine supply routes through Guinea-Bissau. Since an escalation of the fighting in August 1997, landmines laid by the rebels have become increasingly common in Casamance, causing scores of deaths. The Senegalese army believed that many of the arms and landmines they captured may have come from Guinea-Bissau, and investigations by the government in Bissau bore this out, leading to the arrests. In line with last year's international treaty against anti-personnel mines, signed in Ottawa, the Bissau government also began a campaign to destroy the country's large stock of 60,000 landmines, left behind by the Portuguese army when Guinea-Bissau gained its independence in 1975. Not well guarded, many later were diverted not only to the Casamance rebels, but also to Guinea-Bissau's own marketplaces.

The conflict that erupted in June has very quickly devastated that country of 1 million people, driving a third of the population from their homes. It also has raised immediate concerns about wider regional repercussions, with an estimated 10,000 refugees fleeing into Guinea and reports that Senegal's separatist rebels had joined forces with General Mané's troops, prompting both neighbouring governments to send in troops.

All too often, arms collected at the end of one conflict are illegally sold or bartered, fueling insecurity elsewhere.

up or threatened with traditional weapons, as a means of deterring theft.

However, with the rise in gun smuggling across the border (in exchange for money, cattle or other goods), the communities directly in the path of the weapons smugglers have been profoundly changed. The "neighbourhood watches" ended when the thieves began to come with AK-47s. Villagers stay home at night, afraid to cross paths known to be used by arms smugglers or by armed cattle-rustlers (sometimes the same individuals), who sell stolen cattle in the meat-deprived markets of Maputo, Mozambique's capital. Women are reluctant to collect water and firewood, for fear of death, rape or kidnapping.

In reaction to the rise in violence and lawlessness, the villagers themselves are now saving money to buy guns (illegally) for self-defence, perceiving that the only protection against an assault rifle is another assault rifle. They have lost faith in the ability of their own traditional security arrangements to protect them. Lacking resources, fearing loss of life and limb, and corrupted by the impact of the cross-border smuggling networks, the local authorities are hampered from increasing protection along the border. Meanwhile, violence has fostered distrust among the peoples in the area, imperiling maintenance of traditional conflict-resolution customs in and around Boane. In many instances the notion of law — either promoted by the authorities or channeled through traditional mechanisms — has been reduced to its most basic and violent form: the possession of a gun.

Cattle rustling in the Horn

In long-standing conflict areas along the borders of Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya, guns also have been responsible for turning the traditional communal activities of pastoral societies into deadly confrontations. A recent study on small arms in the Horn of Africa by the International Resource Group (IRG), a non-governmental organization devoted to disarmament and security issues in the region, found that the introduction of modern arms has "turned normally benign inter-communal competitions over resources into utterly catastrophic experiences."

Rustlers among Kenya's Karamajong, now carrying modern arms instead of traditional weapons, have succeeded in amassing the cattle of their neighbours, the IRG noted, adding that cases of low-level disturbances among the West Pokots of Kenya are often reported and "may be an indication of trickles of arms from South Sudan/Ethiopia seeping into this area." Forays by armed Ethiopians into the adjacent districts of Kenya also have occurred. By all counts, reported the IRG, "this is the most neglected area of the entire Horn region. When this is further complicated by the introduction of modern arms, it is possible that the lives of numerous traditional peoples have been drastically affected."

In a context of both inter-ethnic conflict and violence within communities, "seeking arms for the protection of oneself and one's livestock figures very high in the dreams of every young and able male," says the report. As a result, herders "act not only as consumers of small arms but also as traffickers in arms."

Clearly, the increased availability of small arms in Africa has contributed to the emergence of a culture of violence. The examples above refer to the impact on pastoral societies, but similar effects can be found among other communities, as new trans-national criminal networks become more pervasive and deadly in Eastern and Southern Africa. As a result, progress toward good governance, stability and peace has been complicated. Small arms trafficking has become one of the biggest threats to national and regional security in Africa. ■

UN commission urges stricter firearms controls

Because illegal arms sales harm national security and "endanger the well-being of people and their social and economic development," governments should draw up an international instrument to combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice has recommended. The draft resolution, which was adopted on 30 April at the close of a Commission session in Vienna, is being passed on to the UN Economic and Social Council for approval. Of the 33 countries sponsoring the resolution, 13 are from Africa. The US, in a shift from previous policy, also joined in sponsoring the resolution.

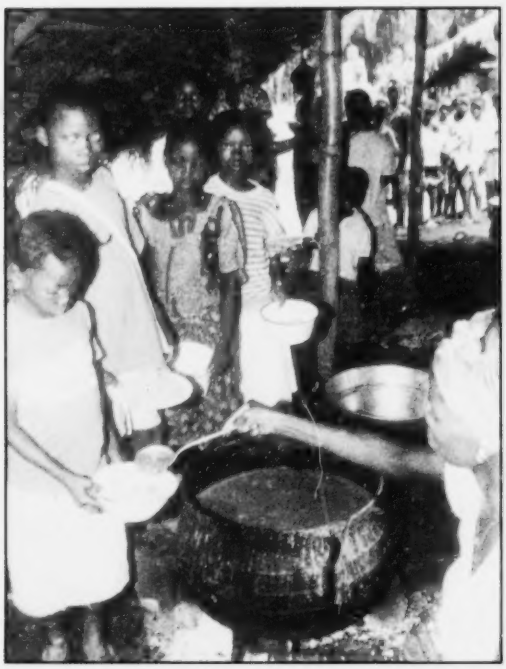
In a report to the Commission devoted specifically to the regulation of firearms, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted that a series of regional workshops, held in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America between September 1997 and January 1998, had produced elements for a possible declaration of principles on the issue. To fight against illicit firearms trafficking, the report suggested greater cooperation and information exchange among law enforcement bodies, the development of standard systems for firearm identification, and "a stronger international regime for import and export licensing of firearms."

Donors back Liberia's reconstruction

Governance and refugee resettlement high on the agenda

By ***Ahunna Eziakonwa***

Expressing support for Liberia's national reconstruction efforts, bilateral and multilateral donors pledged $230 mn at a special donors' meeting held in Paris on 7 April 1998. The pledges, which fell short of the $438 mn requested by Liberia for its two-year national reconstruction programme, came as a contribution towards rebuilding the country's infrastructure and revitalizing its institutions after a seven-year civil war that left more than 150,000 people dead and sent nearly one-third of the population fleeing to neighbouring countries.



Liberian refugee children being fed at a relief centre near Monrovia.

Co-chaired by the World Bank, UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Netherlands' Ministry for Development Cooperation, the meeting was a major follow-up to the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Special Conference on Liberia, held at UN headquarters in New York, last October. It was part of a continuing effort to provide political and economic support to Liberia following completion of the peace process led by the Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

Since the inauguration of the government of President Charles Taylor on 2 August 1997, fighting has ceased in Liberia and refugees are gradually returning home. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms. Sadako Ogata, announced at the end of May that at least 26,000 Liberian refugees had returned home from Ghana, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire since December. However, the country now faces the daunting task of reconstruction, which severely taxes the capacity of a government that inherited a virtually empty treasury. Finance Minister Elie Saleeby reported in November that Liberia's total external debt is now in excess of $3 bn, with payment arrears to multilateral institutions alone standing at over $1 bn. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for the period 1990 to 1994, debt service due to multilateral and bilateral creditors averaged 11 per cent of Liberia's GNP, while debt service actually paid averaged 0.8 per cent. The government is also burdened with a domestic debt of $200 mn.

The donors' meeting in April marked an important opportunity to focus international attention on major post-war reconstruction issues, including governance and civil service reform; economic management; repatriation and resettlement; social sector rehabilitation; agriculture and rural development; and infrastructural needs.

Several participants emphasized the links between peace, security and development. UNDP has earmarked up to $5.8 mn to support the country's reconstruction, including resettlement and reintegration, with a focus on poverty-reduction; capacity building; and promotion of good governance. The UNDP programme also emphasizes providing basic social services and restarting production activities in eight of Liberia's 13 counties, primarily in small towns and villages.

Stating its commitment to democracy, the rule of law and development, the government said it had established a "government of inclusion," as well as several commissions on good governance, human rights and national reconciliation, and banking and finance. Due to better collection, government revenue was up from $1.05 mn during the first seven months of 1997 to about $125 mn over the subsequent five-month period. Other achievements included the establishment of a transitional five-month, cash-based and balanced budget; payment of all public sector salary arrears; and a decision to formalize the use of both the US and Liberian dollars as legal tender based on market-determined exchange rates.

Adherence to democratic standards

Donors agreed that substantial external assistance is required for the government to achieve its goals. However, there was consensus that such aid should serve as a temporary catalyst rather than becoming a source of continuous dependence. Donors also made clear that Liberia's adherence to the standards of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as well as transparency and accountability, was key to sustaining their support. Safeguarding press freedom and eliminating police brutality were specifically cited.

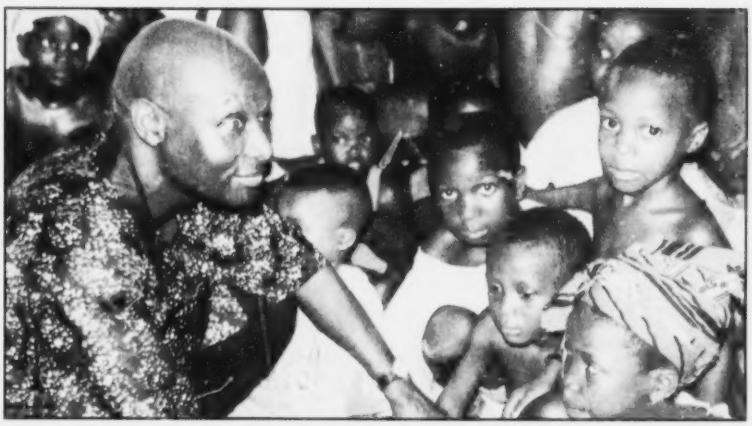
Many speakers stressed that economic activity will remain seriously constrained until adequate security is restored in the country. They urged the government and the Economic Community of West African States to agree quickly on an arrangement to facilitate the continued presence of ECOMOG in the country, as a means of further consolidating peace and security. Following the donors' meeting, the government and ECOMOG signed a formal agreement on 5 June, giving ECOMOG a new and more defined mandate in post-war Liberia. ECOMOG will help the government in providing security throughout the country, and in maintaining law and order. The sub-regional force also will assist in restructuring Liberia's army and police.

Noting that Liberia's rehabilitation will require a coordinated long-term response, donors said they would periodically assess the country's reconstruction and development needs and its compliance with the benchmarks for democracy. They also decided to hold a comprehensive discussion on Liberia's debt problem, with a view to finding innovative solutions. The next donors' conference is tentatively scheduled to take place in December 1998, to be chaired by the World Bank. ■

Aiding child victims in Sierra Leone

UN Special Representative appeals for international support

By ***Ahunna Eziakonwa***



Mr. Olara Otunnu with displaced children in Daru, Sierra Leone, in May.

The road to national recovery in Sierra Leone may well lie in providing rehabilitation to children and women affected by war, says Mr. Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. At a 2 June press conference in New York, Mr. Otunnu challenged the international community to respond more vigorously to the needs of Sierra Leonean children.

Just back from a four-day visit to Sierra Leone, two months after the democratically elected President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was restored to power by the Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), following a 1997 coup, the Special Representative described "one of the most harrowing sights" he had ever seen — hundreds of unaccompanied children in desperate need of food, clothing and shelter. He recounted with concern, "the emergence of a new community" of people whose limbs had been severed by rebels of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and their Revolutionary United Front (RUF) allies. Approximately 300 such victims were treated in May at Connaught Hospital in Freetown, perhaps only a small proportion of those recently maimed. "I will never forget the words of a young boy of about five years who told me that after severing his hands, the RUF soldiers told him: 'Go tell President Kabbah that we are still here'," Mr. Otunnu said.

ECOMOG forces, now in charge of the country's security, have taken control of about 80 per cent of the territory and are trying to secure the remaining areas.

The Kabbah government faces a tough situation. The UN Development Programme 1997 *Human Development Report* ranks Sierra Leone as the second least developed nation in the world, after Niger. Conflict since 1991 has killed more than 10,000 people and displaced several hundred thousand.

In May, the UN called for payment of funds pledged to the voluntary Trust Fund which it launched in April 1997, but for which only $1.9 mn of the $11 mn pledged had been received. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms. Sadako Ogata, also issued an urgent appeal for $7.3 mn to help new refugee arrivals in Guinea and Liberia until the end of the year. Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia and Guinea now exceed 500,000, in addition to 50,000 internally displaced seeking shelter in camps and towns in northern Sierra Leone. Faced with a deteriorating humanitarian situation, the UN appealed for another $20.2 mn at the end of June.

In a report to the Security Council on Sierra Leone that same month, Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced plans for a high-level conference to mobilize assistance. Mr. Annan also recommended deploying a limited number of unarmed military observers "to lend impetus to a fragile but vital peace process," and help encourage the rebels to surrender. Accordingly, the Security Council on 13 July established the UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Otunnu remains optimistic. He told *Africa Recovery* that despite continuing instability in parts of the country, "there is still a large space — political as well as geographic — for serious engagement in terms of programmes for rehabilitation and reconstruction."

Sierra Leone has the appropriate conditions, he added, for decisive action by the international community: a restored democratic government enjoying wide legitimacy; a demonstrated will by the government and civil society to address "the crisis of youth"; and a regional peacekeeping force which has maintained a rapport with the civilian population and is therefore able to respond effectively to the still precarious security situation.

During his visit, Mr. Otunnu secured commitments for the rehabilitation and protection of children. The civil defence forces (CDF), known as the "Kamajors," agreed to stop recruiting children under the age of 18. The government, ECOMOG and CDF also agreed to establish a joint task force to oversee the demobilization and reintegration of ex-child soldiers. With at least 3,000 children in the rebel army, Mr. Otunnu said children still need to be protected from further involvement in conflict.

Impressed by the Sierra Leoneans' display of confidence, Mr. Otunnu said "we must help them to consolidate that sense of self-confidence." But he also warned that the country's restored democracy and its prospects for stability could be jeopardized by a wait-and-see attitude on the part of the international community. ■

Hope for abducted children of northern Uganda

Hundreds of children from northern Uganda are believed to have been abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and other Ugandan rebel groups and taken to the border region between Uganda and Sudan. To gain first-hand information of their plight, as well as of the impact on children of the war in southern Sudan, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict Olara Otunnu visited Sudan on 14-17 June.

During the visit, the Sudanese government facilitated the release of three such children, and Mr. Otunnu expressed appreciation for its cooperation. During talks with Sudanese authorities, Mr. Otunnu also secured their commitment to stop the recruitment of children below the age of 18 and to do everything possible to avoid the deployment of landmines in southern Sudan.

Moving women to centre-stage

Major conference at ECA points the way forward on gender and development in Africa

By ***Nii K. Bentsi-Enchill***
Addis Ababa

Africa's development depends in large part on ending discrimination against women, who are the continent's most productive force. This is why pioneering work on gender has been going on since 1971 at the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), says its Executive Secretary, Mr. K.Y. Amoako, describing it as the "single greatest crosscutting issue." It is also why "African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future" was chosen as the theme of ECA's 40th anniversary conference, Mr. Amoako told the opening session.

The conference, held in Addis Ababa from 28 April to 1 May 1998, was a major affair. It did not end with a declaration, but the participants — well over 1,000 — committed themselves to carry home the decisions made in Addis Ababa, and to implement them at local, national and sub-regional level. They decided to, among other things: introduce a gender perspective in all economic and budgetary work; promote women's participation in governance; enable women to benefit directly from information and communications technology; and train youth to play a full role in Africa's development.

Key participants included UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who were joined for a "Leaders' Forum" on the last day by Presidents Blaise Compaoré (Burkina Faso) and Festus Mogae (Botswana), Vice-Presidents Wandira Specioza Kazibwe (Uganda) and John Atta-Mills (Ghana), Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia (Algeria), Secretary of State Sadek Fayala (Tunisia), as well as Organization of African Unity (OAU) Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim and Mr. Amoako.

Conference organizers structured the proceedings to demonstrate that progress in gender issues depends on an informed dialogue and partnership between men and women (and youth) and women's full participation in decision-making in all economic and social sectors. Thus, between plenary sessions, the conference broke up into smaller working groups for a day of intensive discussions on the major themes.

Several of these groups were chaired by some of the 50 African ministers, drawn from a wide range of sectors, who came, not to make set-piece speeches, but to exchange ideas and reinforce their own commitment. Many of them were, of course, women. And alongside the high-level representatives of many UN, multilateral and bilateral agencies, there were also numerous African and external non-governmental organizations (NGOs), providing their own energy and perspectives and making full use of an official "open space" in the conference centre to publicize their work.

A time for boldness and vision

Progress in five key areas is "creating new opportunities of historic dimensions for social development in Africa," Mr. Amoako said in his opening speech. These are the information and communications revolution; improvements in health systems; increasingly responsive sys-

ECA broadens its partnerships

At the top of the current agenda, says Ms. Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), is seeing to the implementation at local, national and sub-regional level of the results of ECA's 28 April-1 May conference. This is why ECA is "deepening" its working relations with institutional partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other parts of civil society. This is also why the conference "was not planned as something 'for women only' but for all of us to look at gender issues together."

ECA takes gender equity "very seriously." Indicators of that commitment include her own appointment in February as the first woman Deputy Executive Secretary in ECA's 40-year life, and the fact that the directors of three of its five substantive divisions are women. These appointments, she adds, signal recognition by Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako that any institution involved in African development has to make progress on gender issues within its own house.

Ms. Ben Barka, from Mali, is a winner of the UNESCO Literacy Prize, and has a doctorate from the University of Southern California. She has also worked widely in West Africa on education and gender issues, including with NGOs and UN agencies. This includes working for some 15 years with women in villages on literacy and on strategies to improve their conditions.

From her own broad experience, she argues that development strategies tend to lack the crucial element of sustainability due to inadequate analysis of what works best in practice. Ms. Ben Barka says "we would do very good work as women if we review our concepts, our understanding, our strategies, our action, document them, go to theory, and use the theory for our practice." She feels the "women with diplomas" should focus more on these areas.

During the conference, Ms. Ben Barka chaired a meeting held to launch publications of ECA's African Centre for Women (ACW). Among these is a *Compendium of Good Practices* which, she recalls, some people criticized because two-thirds of the success stories come from the World Bank. The critics argued that they have their own experiences at micro level. "I was pleased with this," Ms. Ben Barka says, "but I asked how many of them take the time to document their work with grassroots women?" She points out that the ACW had asked women's groups for two-and-a-half-page contributions to the *Compendium*, and not received enough of them.

Ms. Lalla Ben Barka, ECA Deputy Executive Secretary

She knows there is good work being done, but she insists that it must be documented to be properly shared, reviewed, criticized and improved upon. She also says she is not comparing NGOs and activists unfavorably with the resource-rich World Bank, but simply challenging them because "we need more thinking by women about the strategies for women's advancement." Through its publications, she adds, the ACW is "first of all trying to share more and more information. Then you will get more people doing deeper and critical analysis. But it is not easy." She repeats the invitation for women's groups to contribute to the *Compendium*, stressing that "they have so much to say and to share."

Ministers to mobilize political will

More than 50 African ministers attending the ECA conference pledged to develop at the highest level of government "a veritable political will favourable to the advancement of women and responsive to gender disparities and gender issues." At a special meeting held to draw up their own position, the ministers listed several reasons for optimism for Africa's new generation, including "the welcome influence of globalization on African economies." They undertook to disseminate the results of the conference through follow-up activities at national and community level.

Among their recommendations, the ministers said quotas should be institutionalized to increase women's participation in decision-making, and that the post-Beijing national plans of action should be integrated into development planning. Structural adjustment programmes should be harmonized with the specific social and gender conditions of individual countries, and decision-makers, especially planners and those involved in preparing national budgets, should be sensitized to gender and development issues. They proposed devising legislation to facilitate women's access to land, and to combat gender inequality as well as all violence against women and girls at home, at school and in the community. The ministers also called for conversion of national debt into financing for women's and youth projects.

tems of governance; broader local and international partnerships (including with civil society and the private sector); and the drive to end gender discrimination.

Momentum is increasing in all these areas and pushing Africa towards "a golden age of social development," he continued. Warning that this age will come about only when leaders and policy-makers consciously build on current opportunities, he said now is the time "for boldness, for vision and for optimism for the well-being of Africa's peoples in the decades ahead."

Progress for women "does not intrinsically require" multi-party elections, Westminster democracies, fully liberalized markets, and fully adjusted macro-economic policies. All governments, political systems, economies and economic systems "can and should be held to the tests of gender integration and equity," Mr. Amoako said.

This opened up a central theme, that African development is being retarded by the discrimination that continues to afflict at least half its population. As Secretary-General Kofi Annan put it, gender equality "is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance."

Such equality is a practical necessity, said Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, stating that societies that fail to make full use of half their human resources are "condemned to remain wallowing in poverty and backwardness." He hoped the "destitute, poor and average African woman whose life situation embodies the African economic, political and social predicament so vividly and so fully" would occupy centre-stage of the conference.

According to Mr. Annan, Africa's challenge today is fully to harness "the wisdom, the energies, and the creativity of women, to the benefit of all." This means ensuring that women are involved "at every stage, at every level and at all times, in the process of building the new Africa." Even in the midst of war, he reminded everyone, women keep family life going, they care for the sick and injured; they fetch water and firewood, grow crops, and tend animals. It is "an injustice and an outrage that women, who are the most likely to argue for peace, are also the ones most severely punished in conflicts usually created by men," the Secretary-General declared.

Urging African leaders to recognize that women's rights are human rights, he pointed out that almost half of Africa's population is under 25 years old, and more than half of them are girls and young women. He said African governments, the international community and the UN system must collaborate to ensure that they do not become a lost generation. Provided a forum by the conference to speak for themselves, young Africans from 18 countries discussed issues of concern to them and put their views directly to government leaders in the final session.

Choices for the future

Indeed, girls and women have the most to lose if the right choices are not made, Sweden's State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Mats Karlsson told the plenary session. "It is when women organize that a new democratic culture will emerge," he added.

Mr. Karlsson said Africa is undergoing a gender revolution that should put an end to "gender apartheid." The process is not only part of a "radical deepening of democratic culture and respect for human rights," but also part of a wider economic challenge.

For example, empowering women for poverty eradication means women having "their full share of power over local resources" and getting land rights and access to credit. Stressing that women's choices in risk assessment and time allocation can make or break the efficient link between micro and macro strategies, Mr. Karlsson challenged those who "have not understood the need for gender analysis in road building [to] go back and learn their ABCs."

He charted Sweden's progress from the "undemocratic, poverty-stricken country" of his

ECA Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako (left) with OAU Secretary-General Salim Salim, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Uganda's Planning and Economic Development Minister Richard Kaijuka at the conference.

parents to today's democratic and social market economy in which women form over 40 per cent of the parliament and half the government. He then said Africa faces three pairs of options: "whether to deepen or disregard the culture of democracy, the respect for human rights, and allow the gender revolution to run its course; whether to make the emerging market economies social or see their creative power appropriated by elites and wasted through corruption; whether to create a capacity revolution to strengthen the people's ability to analyze, choose and shape [their future], or continue to let people be incapacitated by ignorance or the dependency syndrome."

UN Photo/ Eskinder

Vice-President Wandera Specioza Kazibwe of Uganda

Injecting his own dose of realism into the proceedings, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi pointed out that women's rights are not simply a legal or constitutional matter. There must also be a "commitment to grassroots democracy which must incorporate the vast majority of women and their active participation in decision-making at various levels." He argued that the virtue of women's participation is not "independent of the values they bring to bear on policy formulation." Policies that are not people-centred and that are elitist in their thrust would have little meaning or relevance to the average woman, no matter who is their author, the Prime Minister said.

Tough talk

Amidst the polite and often earnest speech-making, there were special moments. Among them was when Vice-President Kazibwe challenged the men on the podium with her for the Leaders' Forum: "How can you call yourself a man when there is no food in your home?"

Another moment came after Mr. Meles told women that "anything worth having is never given, it is always taken, so don't ask us for anything, go for it, just take it." Addressing NGOs, he said that if they were merely mouthpieces for external funding agencies as to what African women need, "then you will always beg." He said they would be strong only if they focused on questions essential to women. The only way forward, he added, was through the kind of political activism and dedication to grassroots work "that has little glamour, does not bring instant notice and is plain difficult." But such work will "help lay the foundation for the liberation of the African woman," he said, adding that "if you don't amount to much at the grassroots level, you won't amount to much at policy level."

Mr. Meles expressed support for affirmative action, except if it falls into tokenism. He also opposed having women in cabinet just so a government "can show off." He insisted on having "effective ministers" whatever their gender.

Mr. Annan then intervened mildly, recalling that women complain of being held to higher standards than men and demand the right to be as mediocre as men.

Yet another moment was when UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Stephen Lewis called for an end to the "really invidious ... gender discrimination which runs through the UN system." There is no agency for gender issues, while the UN system has separate entities that "represent the post office, air travel and intellectual property." He said the closest thing to such an agency is the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Even with a meagre annual budget of under $20 mn, and some 45-50 staff, it has made a "very considerable impact when it is given the opportunity," Mr. Lewis said. If the UN wants to make a principled difference in Africa, he said, one way is to multiply UNIFEM's funding and personnel by 10. ■

African Centre for Women aims for strategic impact

Gender mainstreaming is a radical undertaking that requires a "restructuring of the way we think" so that women are taken into account "in all their productive and crucial daily roles which support the economy." According to Ms. Josephine Ouédraogo, Director of ECA's African Centre for Women (ACW), it is part of ECA's mandate to help African countries implement the Platform of Action adopted by the 1995 Women's Conference in Beijing, and the ACW aims to have strategic impact throughout the continent. One milestone was successfully convening the 28 April-1 May conference, which brought together such a range of people.

Ms. Ouédraogo says there must be a wide understanding of the "deep implications" of gender on the conception and implementation of development strategies in all sectors. This is why the ACW aims to help governments make a routine practice of factoring gender into national accounts and statistics. "We hope that some countries will agree to adopt methods that enable gender-disaggregated data to influence the priorities for investment."

Lisa McQuay

ACW Director Josephine Ouédraogo was Burkina Faso's Minister of Family Development and National Solidarity in 1984-87, then went on to varied development work. She was Director-General for International Cooperation in Burkina's foreign ministry from 1995 until her ECA appointment in April 1997.

For example, village women in the Sahel spend two or three hours each day to make one kilogramme of millet flour to feed the family, using rudimentary tools and tiring techniques. This daily effort is not factored into national accounts and "we don't know the real cost of each kilo of flour eaten every day in the village." When it becomes clear that those hours of labour have an economic cost, and also prevent women from doing other things, "then it is obviously beneficial to tilt investment priorities towards agro-industrial processing, to facilitate access to flour!"

Gender programmes should, therefore, be integrated in all the major ministries such as agriculture, education, trade, finance and health. She notes that some countries are already adopting this cross-sectoral approach.

But to be able to help governments, ECA had to begin gender mainstreaming within its own house, she told *Africa Recovery* during the conference. An important structural move was the upgrading of the ACW by making its head a director alongside the directors of ECA's seven other divisions, as part of the institution's "strategic reorientation."

Then began the process of integrating

Themes for progress on gender

By **Nii K. Bentsi-Enchill**
Addis Ababa

The ECA conference had four themes: the role of women in developing African economies; African women and the information age: a new window of opportunity; the essential participation of women in achieving good governance; and creating opportunities for Africa's new generation.

Discussions on the first two themes, particularly on getting gender into national accounts and national budgets (see box below), brought out the combination of technical and political work that must be done. A crucial question common to the sessions on governance and on the new generation was how to create the conditions for meaningful participation in decision-making. The recommendations included better education (including legal), as well as economic empowerment.

Noting the various constraints on women's participation in politics, the conference called for affirmative action at all levels of political, legal and administrative structures. This would help counter a situation where women's representation in African parliaments is only 11 per cent, far below the 30 per cent target set by the UN Economic and Social Council.

An ECA discussion paper notes that women's NGOs along with governments in some countries are trying to increase women's participation at national and local level. Uganda's Constitution stipulates that each administrative district must have one woman parliamentarian, and one-third of local government representatives must be women. South Africa's African National Congress reserves 30 per cent of its parliamentary seats and 50 per cent of its local government seats for women. Other countries making notable progress, the ECA paper says, include Namibia and Tanzania, which have quotas for women's representation, along with Mozambique and the Seychelles. And Botswana, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia are among the countries where women's participation has become a key issue, and NGOs are supporting women candidates at elections.

However, the paper points out, such NGO and government initiatives focus on elective office rather than other areas in which critical decision-making takes place, thereby directing efforts more at how to fit into existing power structures than at transforming them.

Women and new technology

The question of transforming structures also came up in discussions on new information and communications technology (ICT).

Given the growing number of ICT initiatives under way in Africa, it is urgent to analyze projects and the proposed beneficiaries from a gender perspective, said Ms. Gillian Marcelle of the UN University Institute of New Technologies. In a paper prepared for the conference, she observed that with 12 per cent of the world's population, Africa has only 2 per cent of the world's phone lines. There is one telephone line for some 235 Africans, most of them in cities; and installation and maintenance costs are the highest in the world. Most importantly, there is poor coordination between ICT policy and national development needs, particularly in key economic and social sectors.

Women's empowerment is not addressed in the current deregulation and liberalization of communications resources in Africa, added Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director of the Panos Institute in Lusaka. Computer literacy is becoming "an indispensable tool for organizing and mobilizing communities, and women need to be directly involved." But women who criti-

gender issues in the work programmes of all divisions. The first step was to assess precisely what would be required for each division's work, for example, social and economic policy analysis, or development management. There were two-day workshops (in November 1997 and February 1998), with senior staff ranging from Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako's Cabinet Office and the division directors to the Sub-Regional Development Centres.

"It was quite tough at first, and nearly conflictual," says Ms. Ouédraogo. Some officials "had their own vision and felt we were trying to intrude in their personal conception, their traditions and their customs. Of course, gender issues reach deeply into people's sensitivities and behaviour. So we tackled them strictly on development issues."

For example, "we looked at macroeconomic indicators and said: how can you explain that some activities have a monetary value when others, performed by women, do not?" The target was to get the officials to see the problems in the same way. And the key was using two trainers — Ms. Nalini Burn, a Mauritian economist, and Ms. Gladys Mutokwa, a Zambian lawyer — who could talk to ECA directors and senior staff on a professional level. This made the discussions "straightforward," says Ms. Ouédraogo.

She recalls a meeting in New York last February at which all UN agencies had to report on progress in integrating gender in their work. She feels the meeting showed that the ECA was the first institution "to have gone so far and so deeply into the issue." In other agencies, "whatever measures they had taken were still at too low a level to have the structures and expertise that enable you to be taken seriously by the decision-makers."

Work continues on strengthening the tools and methods for mainstreaming gender in the work of ECA divisions, along with better indicators of progress. The two consultants will make detailed proposals for discussion at a workshop later this year. Ms. Ouédraogo says there is still a long way to go before gender analysis progresses from being an adjunct, to being a central factor in development policies and programmes in Africa.

Recent publications of the African Centre for Women:

Gender-Responsive Development – Compendium of Good Practice (Interim Report, May 1998)

The Status of Women — Fact sheets on Africa's 53 countries (1998)

Traditional and Cultural Practices Harmful to the Girl-Child (1997)

A Study of the Economic Empowerment of Women and their Role in the Socio-Economic Development of Africa (1996)

The African Women Report: Participation of Women in the Economic Sector (1995)

International Legal Instruments Relevant to Women (1994)

A Roll Call of Africa's Distinguished Daughters (1994)

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cize the media's role in reinforcing discrimination must now discuss whether to "create their own closed spaces on the Internet or assert their presence in mixed spaces," she said.

Women around the world are using ICTs for advocacy, and in Africa, such organizations as ABANTU for Development, SangoNet, Environment and Development Action Third World (ENDA) and the Association for Progressive Communications, are conducting training for women's groups, Ms. Opoku-Mensah reported. In Uganda, the Forum for Women in Democracy accesses relevant information on the Internet for women parliamentarians to help them in their legislative work. Women's groups are also uniquely placed to facilitate access to ICTs for small-scale farmers, petty traders and housewives.

She urged women's groups to play a role in the evolution of the ICT landscape in Africa, and to exert influence on the two main agents — national governments and specialized UN agencies such as the International Telecommunications Union and UNESCO. New networks such as WomenNet and the Reproductive Rights Alliance in South Africa should also engage governments in dialogues on communications policy.

But to do all this, activists must know what they are talking about, Ms. Opoku-Mensah warned. Among other things, women's groups should identify women's specific needs and opportunities, assess the positive or negative impact of ICTs on women, and relate these elements to a country's general and sectoral development practices and goals, she concluded.

Making women visible

Discussions on the first theme — the role of women in economic development — made links between the problems at different levels. Africa is now said to need 9 per cent annual economic growth to reduce poverty substantially. The previous estimate was 6 per cent, and the region is barely managing 4 per cent growth, said Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a Liberian party leader and former Assistant Administrator of the UN Development Programme. Faster growth at macro level has little positive effect on ordinary people, added Ms. Ngone Diop of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). In any case, Ms. Yacine Fall of the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) declared, the neo-liberal economic policies of the past 15 years have been a failure. Evidently, the appropriate type of growth is one that promotes gender equity, concluded Ms. Sarah Ocran of Third World Network – Africa.

In the first place, other speakers pointed out, women are generally "invisible" in national accounts and economic policy throughout the continent. An ECA paper states that over two-thirds of the energy-depleting and time-consuming activity of millions of women, girls,

Stronger NGOs needed for grassroots work

The best outcome of the ECA conference on African women will be "concrete actions on the ground, and the means to finance them," says Ms. Pauline Biyong, an activist on the non-governmental organization (NGO) scene in Africa.

But noting the disappointing performance of the Ministry for Women's Affairs in her own country, Cameroon, she numbers herself among those who do not believe in special ministries for women. "Since women are involved in all sectors, issues affecting women are therefore present in all sectors." In any case, she adds, there are sometimes women in government "who don't really advance the cause of women. But it is hard to do anything about it when they are specially chosen, in some cases by decree."

Among other things, Ms. Biyong is president of the League for Women's and Children's Education in Cameroon, and founder of the Cameroonian Federation of Women's Associations. She is also the publisher of *La Cité*, a newspaper that aims to raise consciousness on gender and other development issues and monitors the progress of women in public life. The front-page editorial of the April 1988 edition is titled "Abus de confiance" (Betrayal of trust). It argues that Cameroon's women have received far less than was promised during the 1997 elections.

A firm believer in the progressive potential of NGOs, Ms. Biyong stresses the importance of having stronger NGOs at a time when "the disengagement of the state is occurring without any proper structures and processes to see through the transition." But while "civil society" is the latest fashion, she says, "if you look hard at the [NGO] scene, things are pretty catastrophic."

In the first place, she says, many people in these NGOs need training in basic management and accounting skills. With all the rules and conditions they have to observe in their relations with external or domestic agencies, "it's like asking somebody to write when they have never been to school." Also, NGOs still have no legal status in some countries. "It's one thing to go and sign conventions abroad, but quite another when at home, a government is still wary of NGOs."

Nji K. Bertig-Enchill

Ms. Pauline Biyong, president of the League for Women's and Children's Education in Cameroon

According to Ms. Biyong, NGO federations and networks are not working all that well, and uses her own Cameroonian Federation of Women's Associations as an example. "I spent two years of my life on this, with little success. Out of 85 associations, we could not really strengthen even two or three." That federation still exists, she says. But "how can you have a strong chain with weak links?"

Ms. Biyong feels it would be better for some NGOs to develop their strengths, before coming together in a network. She prefers this to the "trawling and dredging that goes on now," with people competing for donor funding.

"The deplorable thing we are now seeing is people setting up NGOs according to donor programmes. If the current thing is AIDS, then our people go there. If it's the environment, then people go there." She insists that there are others who share her views, but she understands their silence. "Things are tough and people (including those who work for NGOs) are hungry...."

She urges NGOs to develop their own agenda and advises caution with donors since their objectives are not necessarily those of African countries or African NGOs. She also contrasts the "first-class" conditions in which many development officials operate with the low levels of funding they give to NGOs that are active on the ground, as well as the tight conditions on its use. Resolute, Ms. Biyong says she will just continue to argue for more tangible support at national and international level for work at the grassroots, "where it is really needed."

boys and men is unrecorded, in the unpaid reproductive sector and the informal sector. This keeps the livelihoods of millions of Africans outside the reach of policy. Dominant economic theory assumes that women's and children's time and energy in unpaid production and social reproduction are limitless and can be considered outside the "economic domain."

But women's time and energy are used in both the "unpaid, non-marketed sector of social reproduction and the paid formal monetized economy" and form a crucial link between the two "which cannot be ignored in economic analysis and policy formulation," the paper notes.

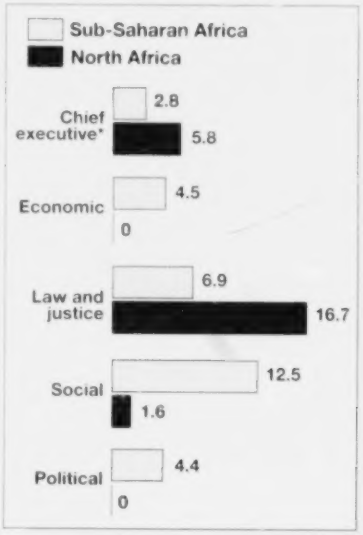
Such observations led conference participants to decide to push their countries forward in terms of national accounts and other data that are disaggregated by gender, and national budgets that are gender-sensitive. One speaker said governments have been "using weak data to make big policies." Another said it is a conceptual challenge for some governments to link accurate data to policy making, and to evaluate the impact of their policies. And while it is now acknowledged that policies have different effects on women, men, girls and boys, participants agreed that if the impact is unknown, then budget allocations cannot be optimized.

It will take advocacy, political will and clear guidelines to collect the data that accurately reflect the economic and social realities of men and women, participants said in the workshop on national accounts and other data, chaired by Gambia's Education Minister, Ms. Satang Jow. Among the first steps, said ECA Regional Adviser on Statistical Systems, Ms. Awa Thiongane, is to redefine economic activity to include the unpaid, unquantified and unrecorded activities and services performed by women. This will result in more accurate information on women's real contribution to the gross national product. The weakness of data-collection services in many countries could have a positive aspect, one participant said: it will be easier to build in the gender perspective as the services grow stronger.

It will also take time and improved methods. Tunisia, for example, has a gender project steering committee which has members from different departments and seeks to connect the gender perspective in concrete ways in specific sectors, said Mr. Imed Melitti of that country's Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Leading the working group on budgetary policies and procedures, the Director-General of Namibia's Department of Women's Affairs, Ms. Netumbo Ndaitwah, related the work done in late 1997 to launch a gender analysis of the budget, sensitize officials and develop methods for disaggregating revenue data. Other valuable contributions came from a range of countries including Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Zambia. Mr. John Maina, of Kenya's Central

Women in governmental decision-making
(% of all positions, 1994)



* State enterprises

Source: UN Africa Recovery from World Bank data

Forward movement for women in Uganda

Women's empowerment in Uganda is an "irreversible process," and according to Mr. Richard Kaijuka, Minister of Planning and Economic Development, the constitutional requirement that one-third of all local council members be women is a "revolutionary departure from the past." Before, "you wouldn't have a single woman, by the nature of our tradition with men being chauvinistic and women also being shy to come forward when their husbands are there." Now, at district level, women stand alongside men for parliament, "and we gave extra seats for women's representation up to national level."

Interviewed during the ECA conference, Mr. Kaijuka explained that "we had to do this deliberately so we could kick-start the empowerment process. A society has to meaningfully empower, not just talk about it." The "educated and broad-based" leadership also realized that "in order to mobilize the masses, women had to be at centre-stage. And for women to be fully committed, we had to empower them. So it was a mutually reinforcing need."

Another important move was Ms. Wandira Specioza Kazibwe's appointment as Vice-President. "She is a gynaecologist, a consultant, a professional in her own right. She has now become a role model." Noting that there are other women in the cabinet, that the head of the civil service is a woman, and that there are senior women in the parastatals, Mr. Kaijuka says that "even if it is not 50-50 yet," women's representation is well advanced.

Any resentment among men might be "among individuals who keep it quiet." If anything, there are "some extremist women who, instead of building on the strengths of what we have created, come forward and say, before you form a cabinet, we must have 50 or 60 per cent women." He warns against "demanding the unreasonable" from the start, because "this can make others jittery about the process."

Mr. Kaijuka says progress is slow in producing gender-disaggregated data for planning and budgetary purposes, noting the scarcity of accurate and reliable statistics in most African countries. Uganda's parliament has just made the Statistical Bureau an autonomous body "to come to grips with statistical problems" and "we are also going to carry out district resource endowment profiles that will incorporate women's issues and figures."

He declares that conditions for Ugandan women are gradually improving. Reasons for this include the stable macro-economic framework and economic liberalization, along with the feeder and trunk road programme, which have enabled women's agricultural output to be brought to market and sold at better prices. The universal primary education programme is another factor producing a situation in which "a woman right deep in the village has seen a change overnight." He recalls the past when "these women would grow coffee and other produce with nobody to buy it. They were discouraged. So the minute you improve all that, you are enhancing and empowering them through income. The minute you earn more income through your own sweat, and the minute you see your children going to school when before you couldn't pay for it, you tell me how you feel." He said the road programme has "opened up the country more than ever before." And with the entire economic environment liberalized, "those who are dynamic producers have never had it any better."

Bureau of Statistics, stressed the need for policy-makers to grasp the gender-specific effects of budgets on the expenditure side (allocations) and on the revenue side (taxes).

Civil society organizations and NGOs have an important role to play in sensitizing governments to gender concerns, said Ms. Colleen Lowe Morna, Chief Executive Officer of South Africa's Commission on Gender Equality. That country's "women's budget initiative" came primarily from civil society, she noted, and led to detailed analysis of how the 1996/97 budget was spent. For example, less than 2 per cent of the education budget went into adult basic education, although most illiterate people are women. And while 75 per cent of the trade and industry budget benefitted exporters, who are mainly men, only 2 per cent went to small and medium enterprises, in which women often predominate.

Due to pressure from the women's movement, Ms. Lowe Morna continued, South Africa agreed at a Commonwealth meeting in November 1996 to be one of two countries (the other is Sri Lanka) in a pioneering effort to integrate gender concerns into macro-economic policies. This led to South Africa's first budget with gender disaggregated figures, presented last March, and the country's Finance Minister must report on progress to his Commonwealth peers this September, she said.

Women play multiple roles simultaneously and must balance competing claims on limited time.

Peter Magubane / IPS

The conference called for further partnerships, at national, regional and international level, to mainstream gender in key institutions. The Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development was specifically urged to set up a task force on gender in national accounts and other data. Participants also asked ECA to undertake a gender-based evaluation of public spending and revenue in African countries. They said the Nairobi-based Collaborative Centre on Gender, the ABANTU for Development NGO (based in Kaduna, London and Nairobi), and UNDP could help in training officials to draw up gender-sensitive budgets.

Poverty reduction involves a reduction of "time-poverty," suggested Prof. Indu Grover, of the Agricultural University at Hisar, India. Instead of the long hours of drudgery with low productivity, women's time will be more productive with better tools in the household and in the fields, she observed.

Continental peace-making role for women

The African Women's Committee on Peace and Development has been set up jointly by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). With a secretariat in Addis Ababa and an initial $100,000 contribution from the OAU Peace Fund, the committee will work closely with the OAU's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim announced during the ECA women's conference. At his sides were ECA Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako, Ugandan Planning Minister Richard Kaijuka and former Liberian head of state Ruth Perry, who is on the committee.

The establishment of the committee is the fruit of demands made at various African meetings dating from the Regional Conference on Women, Peace and Development, held in Uganda in 1993, which adopted the Kampala Action Plan. This called for women ministers or plenipotentiaries to be included "at all levels" in OAU mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, "and in all other policy organs" of the ECA and the OAU. One recent instance of this longstanding push was when the Women's Leadership Forum on Peace, at a meeting in Johannesburg organized by the OAU and ECA in November 1996, urged Mr. Salim to "accelerate the nomination process" of committee members by African countries and NGOs. The result is as follows:

Government representatives

Ms. Fatimatu Diallo-Da
(Senior Adviser to the President, Burkina Faso)

Ms. Sara Letty Kachingwe
(former Permanent Secretary, Zimbabwe)

Ms Leila Aslaoui
(Senator, Algeria)

Dr. Elizabeth Gadzama
(Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Nigeria)

Dr. Wandira Specioza Kazibwe
(Vice-President of Uganda)

To be announced
a representative from the central African region

Individuals

Ms. Ruth Sando Perry
(Liberia)

Ms. Gertrude Mongella
(Tanzania)

Ms. Patience Haltshwayo Pashe
(South Africa)

Ms. Saida Agrebi
(Tunisia)

Ms. Marie-Theresa Avemeka
(Republic of Congo)

Representative of NGOs

Ms. Veneranda Nzambazamariya
(Pro-Femmes, Rwanda)

Ms. Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika
(Federation of African Women's Peace Networks, Zambia)

Ms. Binta Diop
(Femmes Africa Solidarité, Senegal)

Ms. Meaza Ashenafi
(Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association, Ethiopia)

Ms. Asha Haji Elmi
(Save Somali Women and Children, Somalia)

Similarly, a World Bank draft paper on *Gender, Growth, and Poverty Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa* notes that unlike men who play their mainly "productive" roles sequentially, women play multiple roles (productive, reproductive and household) "simultaneously and must balance simultaneous competing claims on limited time for each of them." Women work mostly without labour-saving technology, or adequate social and extension services. In some countries, women spend nearly three times more time than men on transport activities. The overall result is that women work many hours longer than men in sub-Saharan Africa.

Evidence from Kenya cited in the paper suggests that women may already be more efficient farm managers than men. Other studies from Burkina Faso, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia show that equal access for women to inputs and other resources can boost agricultural productivity and household income. But African women get less than 10 per cent of credit to small farmers and 1 per cent of total credit to agriculture, UNDP estimated in 1995.

The Bank paper says gender factors reveal the weakness of markets and prices as instruments of policy in resource allocation. In a striking passage, the paper observes the "deteriorating economic and welfare indicators, which reflect the stresses" in some sub-Saharan countries undergoing structural adjustment. The "problem of women's invisibility" is particularly significant because with the increasing transfer of costs from the state to the public, women are burdened with an increasing amount of unpaid labour in the household "for reproduction and maintenance of human resources." Ignoring the implications of such changes for unpaid domestic labour implies the assumption that "women's capacity to undertake extra work is infinitely elastic." But the evidence on the ground suggests that "the breaking point has already been reached," the Bank observes. There is "simply not enough female labour time available to maintain the quality and quantity of human resources at its existing level." And in the long run, it warns, falling levels of health, nutrition and education will cause national output to decline.

The idea is not to make more women do more work, the Bank paper says, but to increase their productivity and ease the time pressure and harsh choices that women face. Some policy initiatives, the ECA paper adds, focus on "pro-poor and labour intensive growth," and assume women are an under-utilized resource. But women are more likely to be "over-utilized" and "under-resourced."

One of the conference's most important conclusions was that in order for there to be gender-responsive policy measures and investment, women must take part in policy formulation. And this situation will come about only through the combined efforts of Africa's men and women. ■

Africa Recovery published a Briefing Paper in April, entitled *Women in Africa's development: overcoming obstacles, pushing for progress*, by Ms. Takyiwaa Manuh. It is available on the Internet at <www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec>.

From Liberia to the African stage

Ms. Ruth Sando Perry is modern Africa's first woman head of state, and she feels that her nomination to the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development, has put Liberia on Africa's map in terms of advocacy for peace. Interviewed by *Africa Recovery* during the ECA conference in Addis Ababa, she sent a message back home: "It is time the government recognizes the potential of women and supports their empowerment."

Ms. Perry has an eventful public background. She was an independent legislator, elected as Senator for Grand Cape Mount County in 1985, and sponsored legislation to protect the rights of women and children. She also founded the Peace Now, Peace for Liberia movement, and is a founder member of the Women's Development Association of Liberia, the Liberian Women's Initiative, and Women for Action and Goodwill. She recently set up the Perry Centre in Liberia to provide a range of services for children and youth.

She became head of state by going to Abuja in August 1996 as a member of one of the delegations for another round of the peace negotiations for Liberia conducted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). "They decided that since men had had the opportunity [to make peace] and had not succeeded, they would try the women. I was called and told by the faction leaders and ECOWAS officials that they wanted me to head the government until peace was restored and we had elections."

As mandated by ECOWAS, her tenure was very short and involved disarmament, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of refugees and displaced people, and transparent elections. "We kept our head above water and finally came to the end of the mandate with successful elections. We were very happy that we accomplished those things we were asked to do."

She said Liberian women had been delighted with her appointment, "even if some men and some women were not sure I could deliver." But then everybody decided to get on board. After making a calm evaluation of the whole situation, she says, "I knew I could handle these men."

Unlike men, women rarely make war, said Ms. Ruth Perry (left), Liberia's former Head of State, with Ms. Amina Aden Bile (centre), and Ms. Martha Ahmed, refugees from Somalia and Sudan respectively, during the ECA conference.

Ms. Perry decided to be firm and flexible, finding out what every faction wanted, while "keeping on the back of the international community" to get full logistic and diplomatic support for ECOMOG (the ECOWAS force). And how did she handle the faction leaders? Chuckling, she said "along the way, sometimes you tell them a little truth, and a little something else, always reassuring them about the ballot box. I used my womanly, my motherly touch and everything that you apply within your community, your church and your home."

Ms. Perry looks forward to her new role in building peace for African development, a role that will encourage Africans to find a new term to replace "statesman."

Governance reforms gather pace

National plans of action presented at Special Initiative forum in Accra

By **Iddrisu Siddiq**
Accra

Accountability and transparency are crucial for the political and economic transformation of Africa. But such principles can only be sustained if African governments take extra measures against corruption, and if they promote civil society participation in all spheres of national life, concluded the second African Governance Forum held in Accra, Ghana, on 25 to 26 June.

"Democracy, its accompanying rights of expression and other freedoms are the ultimate insurance of all the reforms we shall discuss in this forum," said Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Declaring that there are no substitutes for the principles of democracy, Mr. Amoako called for an end to winner-takes-all elections, legal and material constraints to forming and running political parties, and state repression of the opposition.

The two-day forum was a sequel to a similar forum held last year in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as the first in an annual series under the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, (UNSIA). The governance component of UNSIA focuses on three areas: expanding capacities for transparent, responsible and effective governance; strengthening the role of civil society in development, including peace-building; and bolstering the capacity of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for peace-building, conflict resolution and national reconciliation.

Organized by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and ECA, the lead agencies of this component, the Accra forum was attended by more than 80 participants, including high-level government officials from 10 African countries, civil society organizations, experts from the UN and other international partners. While the first forum covered a wide range of governance topics — including decentralization, civil society empowerment, human rights, electoral and judicial reform, and public administration — this year's event focused more tightly on selected issues, particularly accountability and transparency in government and public service.

Reflecting on the post-independence history of repression and dispossession in some parts of the continent, Mr. Amoako decried the "alarming phenomenon" of ruling groups tampering with constitutional provisions to lengthen the tenure of incumbent rulers. He applauded participating countries whose leaders "have shown real determination and courage in insisting they will serve for only as long as their respective constitutions allow." Such leaders, he said, are seeking a different future. They are heading towards states that ensure political order, that are based on the rule of law, and safeguard people's property.

At the Accra forum (from left): Mr. Hassy Kitine, Tanzanian Minister of State of Governance, Ms. Thelma Awori, Assistant Administrator of UNDP and Director of its Regional Bureau for Africa, Mr. Athanassios Theodorakis, European Commission, Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers, Special Advisor to the UN Special Initiative of Africa.

The first part of the Accra meeting was devoted to considering the national good governance programmes of 10 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Africa Regional Bureau Thelma Awori observed that the national reports reflected ownership by the governments themselves as well as a commitment to the goal of human-centred development. Among other aspects, the forum participants agreed that transparency and accountability are crucial elements for promoting development, and governments should involve civil society organizations in the process.

Dealing with corruption

Central to the discussions was the need to fight corruption, a key obstacle in entrenching transparency and accountability. Mr. Amoako called on Africans to learn from the Asian debacle, which, in his view, resulted from corruption in both the private and public sectors. Africa could least afford such effects of corruption even though it has displayed good economic performance in recent years. The optimism about its economic prospects is conditional on good governance and good leadership, he continued.

Citing recent research on capital flight which gives some indication of how much "illegal wealth is siphoned from the continent," Mr. Amoako told the forum that Africans have transferred a staggering 37 per cent of their wealth abroad — as compared to 29 per cent in the Middle East, 17 per cent in Latin America, 4 per cent in South Asia and 3 per cent in East Asia.

On his part, Mr. Olav Kjorven, Political Advisor to Norway's Minister of International Development and Human Rights, stressed that corruption, whether it emanates from greed or need, is unacceptable, since the losers are usually "the poor segments of the population." Norway, he said, is increasing its aid programmes in Africa on the basis of "a broad and holistic approach to development," as recommended in the UN Secretary-General's Africa report.

In order to better coordinate and focus the various efforts towards of good governance on the continent, participants agreed that the forums should provide a continuing vehicle for mobilizing support. They also agreed that the next forum, which the government of Mali has offered to host in 1999, would focus on conflict prevention, management and resolution. ■

Iddrisu Siddiq is Information Officer at UNDP's Ghana office.

Business moves more freely in COMESA

As road transit regimes are liberalized and harmonized

By **Mildred Mulenga**

Since transport costs are a major trade barrier and erode the competitive edge of many African countries, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is seeking to lower them by liberalizing and harmonizing transport regimes. This process also aims to reduce various bottlenecks.

COMESA — expected to establish a free trade area by the year 2000 and a customs union by 2004 — has made substantial progress in simplifying, modernizing and harmonizing customs and transit procedures, thus facilitating and improving transport and trade. Business people and road haulers are now operating more freely. This has helped to bring down transport costs and make headway towards a free trade area.

While other factors, such as the reduction of trade tariffs and customs duties have contributed to an increase in intra-COMESA and third-party trade, the harmonized transit regimes also have played a crucial role, enhancing profits and economic growth among the 20 member countries. Trade among COMESA countries was worth $2.7 bn in 1997, compared to $834 mn 12 years ago. COMESA's annual growth of trade with third parties averaged 7.1 per cent and economic growth reached 4.5 per cent in 1997, the highest recorded over the last 10 years.

The harmonization of the transit regimes, however, so far has not worked perfectly. This was highlighted last year when Zambian Vice-President Godfrey Miyanda, while opening a COMESA meeting in Lusaka where it is headquartered, made a familiar appeal: "There is need for all member states to implement ... decisions on these issues. There should be no defaulters."

A number of states have had difficulties implementing some of the COMESA programmes. However, efforts have been made to create efficient and harmonized transport and communications regimes. COMESA Assistant Secretary-General for Programmes Sindiso Ngwenya emphasizes that harmonization is essential for the creation of a single and liberalized market. "A fully free trade area and a customs union entails the harmonization of the socio-economic and technical regulations on transport and communication."

"The returns derived from streamlining and eliminating bureaucratic procedures and requirements have reduced transport costs by an average of 20 per cent."

— Sindiso Ngwenya
Assistant Secretary-General for Programmes, COMESA

So far, the programme has focused on road transport. For although COMESA has a network of 28,510 km of railway lines, up to 80 per cent of the goods in COMESA are transported by road. The countries are linked to one another through a road network consisting of approximately 561,000 km of classified roads.

During the past 12 years, these countries have developed comprehensive transit regimes designed to facilitate the inter-state movements of goods and passengers. Mr. Ngwenya says the returns derived from the harmonized transit regimes have reduced transport costs for COMESA businessmen and road haulers by an average of 20 per cent. ■

Steps toward a uniform system

COMESA has instituted several measures to simplify and liberalize trade in the Common Market. Some of the more far-reaching measures involving transport regimes include:

Uniform rates for road transit charges. Prior to the introduction of uniform road transit charges in July 1991, road haulers were subjected to a multiplicity of road charges and licenses. The uniform rates have introduced stability and predictability in transport costs and resulted in lower road user charges.

Yellow Card. This is a compulsory motor third-party liability insurance scheme. It facilitates smooth movement of motor vehicles in the region, encourages freer movement of people and goods, promotes the development of trade and tourism between member states, and establishes a common system for the settlement of claims arising from inter-state motor vehicle accidents. The Yellow Card is less expensive than third-party motor insurance cover purchased at borders. For example, a Yellow Card for a truck between Harare and Nairobi costs about $70 per year. In the absence of the card, insurance would cost $350.

COMESA carrier license. This was introduced in 1992 to replace road service permits required from haulers operating across borders. Road haulers have benefited from the introduction of the license because this has resulted in the liberalization and deregulation of the regional trucking industry. The liberalization has resulted in competitive freight rates.

Harmonized axle load limits. This facilitates uniform axle load enforcement and exchange of information on violators of axle load limits.

COMESA customs document. Introduced in September 1996, this has replaced 13 different documents. It reduces documentation costs by an estimated 25 per cent and reduces delays at border crossings. In addition, it makes it difficult to fake entries because it is so much easier to verify.

COMESA customs bond guarantee scheme. The scheme, introduced in October 1997, eliminates the avoidable administrative and financial costs that are associated with the current practice of nationally executed customs bonds for transit traffic. The scheme is intended to produce significant transport savings and contribute to trade efficiency by eliminating the current practice of customs bond guarantees executed in each transit country. Approximately $1.2 bn belonging to clearing and forwarding agents and transport operators is tied up in financial institutions for customs bond guarantees. The scheme would also result in quicker clearance of vehicles.

Advance Cargo Information System (ACIS). This management information system enhances performance, communications and exchange of information between transport operators and shippers on one hand and between modes of transport on the other hand. It has improved the passage of goods, port and road transit operations.

ASYCUDA-EUROTRACE. This is a computerized customs management and trade statistics system, introduced in 1993. It reduces the time taken to clear commercial consignments through customs — in the past a major constraint to international trade — and facilitates responses to specialized statistical queries.

Bridging the telecommunications gap

Africa needs new information technologies, investments to enhance competitiveness

By **Ronald V. Neal**

For Africa to develop, it is vital to "bridge the gap between the information haves and the information have-nots," South African President Nelson Mandela told telecommunications professionals gathered at Africa Telecom '98, held in Johannesburg on 4-10 May 1998. The first International Telecommunications Union (ITU) event of its kind ever held in Africa, the conference attracted nearly 20,000 participants from 117 countries, serving as a conduit between an information-deprived continent and technologically-advanced companies from around the world.

Similarly, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) sponsored a conference on global connectivity in Addis Ababa on 2-4 June 1998, seeking concrete solutions to Africa's weak communications infrastructure. In both instances the goal was clear: to revitalize African economies through the development of telecommunications.

Need to improve infrastructure

At Africa Telecom '98, President Mandela commented that his government strongly supports "the right to universal access to telecommunications, a goal that new technologies make achievable. This is consistent both with our principled commitment to equity and with the role of telecommunications infrastructure in socio-economic development."

Africa has lagged behind during much of the 20th century, according to Mr. Jay Naidoo, South Africa's Minister for Post, Telecommunications and Broadcasting, and its technical infrastructure shows the effects of underdevelopment. However, the African renaissance is in the process of reversing that trend. Still, he pointed out, a statistical analysis of Africa's telecommunications system reveals how difficult the road ahead is:

- Only 14 mn phone lines have been installed in sub-Saharan Africa, fewer telephones than in Tokyo, Japan;
- The average waiting time for the installation of a telephone in Africa is five years;
- Fewer than one in 50 Africans has direct telephone access;
- A minimal investment of $50 bn would be required to make African telecommunications competitive with other regions.

Although inducing capital investment under conditions of an underdeveloped telecommunications infrastructure and limited prospects for profits remains a "tough sell," it is not out of the question, as demonstrated by the commitment of Worldspace Corporation, a new US firm specializing in digital radio broadcasting systems. Worldspace announced at the conference that it would make a $500 mn investment in satellite technology in Africa.

> **"New technologies are now available that could substantially improve Africa's connectivity for telecommunications and information networks."**
>
> **— UN Economic Commission for Africa**

Debate on government control

While smaller companies are willing to expand to the African continent, the larger, more established communications giants often demand an environment more favourable to the profit margins of international business. According to US-based MCI, government control is hindering the development of telecommunications in Africa. If an investor-friendly approach is adopted, says Mr. Lawrence Codacovi, MCI's vice president of international services, cellular phone systems — which are wireless — could be developed in poor countries, even in remote villages lacking such basic necessities as running water or electricity.

The information revolution is also accelerating African governments' privatization programmes, since consumer demand for modern telecommunications far exceeds the capacity of state-controlled agencies to fulfill the need. For example, South Africa is privatizing its Telkom system, initially selling a substantial portion — 25 per cent — to Southern Bell, a US concern. In addition, it passed the Telecom Act of 1996, effectively terminating Telkom's monopoly in five years. Another country moving in the direction of privatization is Togo, which recently secured a $30 mn loan from the World Bank for restructuring its telecommunications services sector.

The implications of global connectivity

The expansion of phone lines is one aspect of global connectivity. It means development for rural Africa, where 70% of the population resides. Since telephone ownership has historically been limited to the urban elite, it remains a high priority for African policy-makers to insure that the telecommunications infrastructure target the vast majority who do not inhabit cities. Among those in the forefront of providing telephone access to remote areas are Malawi, Kenya, Ghana, Senegal and South Africa, each of which is devoting significant planning and more funding to this effort. On the larger scale, global connectivity implies access to sophisticated international networks, specifically, the Internet.

That Africa must come to grips with its ineffectual communications system was the focal point of the ECA conference. In a statement of purpose issued by experts at the ECA "Global Connectivity for Africa" forum, it was noted that "new technologies are now available that could substantially improve Africa's connectivity for telecommunications and information networks. These new solutions utilize the most advanced satellite, cellular and fibre optic cable technology and offer the opportunity for vastly improved communications, with increased volumes, higher speed and reliability, and a wider ranger of services, all at lower costs."

Working groups at the conference set forward specific proposals designed to transform domestic delivery of telecommunications, specifically: reducing the cost of gaining access to information; increasing productivity in all sectors utilizing the new technologies; improving the quality and reliability of transmission; and enhancing international access to service providers. African governments must be disposed to releasing regulatory control, if universal access to telecommunications is to become a reality, conference participants concluded.

Integrating Africa into the global information economy — from cellular telephones to the World Wide Web — is a monumental task for the continent's communications experts and policy-makers, but it must be put on the agenda. Information technology is the prerequisite for development in the next millennium, all agreed. ■

New images of Africa in the news

by Djibril Diallo

Hardly a day passes without Africa being mentioned in the news. Lately, however, with US President Clinton's recent six-country tour of the continent, followed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's visit to eight African countries, the tenor of the news is different from what it has been perhaps at any other time in recent memory.

Rather than reading reports of despair, stagnation and crumbling economies on the continent, one hears of hope, dynamic economic reforms and growth. Tales of war, famine and drought, dictatorships and authoritarian rule have been replaced by stories of effective use of the continent's resources for the benefit of its people and of emerging democracies struggling to secure for their people a place in an ever more globalized marketplace. Instead of a nightmarish continent where chaos reigned, we now find in the news what *Time* magazine calls "another Africa rising" — an Africa that works.

Time magazine's writers came face to face with this new aspect of Africa in Mali, in the tiny settlement of Tenemakana, where they saw Awa Kone and other women villagers using an ingenious credit scheme to improve lives in their community. The women pool profits from the sale of bananas, mangoes, onions, tomatoes and other produce from their cooperative garden, and loan out the money to each other at 9 per cent interest. For many of them, this is their first independent source of cash. To date, no woman has defaulted in repaying a loan. When they have saved enough, they plan to build a clinic for their community.

New sense of optimism

All across Africa, stories like this abound, and a new sense of international optimism and confidence about the continent is emerging. In the report *The Causes of Conflict and Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa*, Mr. Kofi Annan told the Security Council in April that the continent "has begun to make significant economic and social progress in recent years". He spoke of political and economic achievements and of the emergence of leaders with confidence in Africa's ability to chart a path to peace and higher levels of development.

And the numbers are there to back up this sense of optimism. From 1995 to 1997, the GDP growth rate in Africa averaged 4 per cent. This number becomes significant when placed side by side with the annual growth rate of 0.4 per cent for the entire 1980s or the 0.9 per cent growth rate for the 1990-94 period. In fact, economic growth has now outpaced population growth in 33 African countries. In 1997, 11 countries — Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Uganda — had economic growth rates of 6 per cent or more. The message of this group of countries is that Africans are taking their future in their own hands.

UN/E. Debebe

Despite the recent positive turnaround in the media images of the continent, millions in Africa still have no access to basic services such as adequate health care.

What makes Africa's turnaround so exciting is that it has been locally driven. African nations are on their own, finding ways to harness their natural and human resources into working models of development, thanks to visionary leadership by a new crop of rulers who are not encumbered by colonial or cold war obligations, but are bristling with confidence and the belief that Africa, with the right commitment, can enter the next century an energized powerhouse.

But much as the story has changed for the better on the continent, it is still not all rosy. Even today, Africa remains a continent in dire straits. Mr. Annan admitted as much when he said that poor economic performance and inequitable development have resulted in near permanent crisis for some states, exacerbating internal tensions and greatly diminishing the governments' capacity to respond to tensions. Poor income growth combined with environmental and population pressures are keeping more than half of Africa's population in poverty.

Moreover, the continuing decline in the level of development assistance flows to Africa, coupled with the crushing debt burden carried by many countries, means that more and more countries find themselves left with less and less to meet the basic social needs of their people. The result: poverty remains the order of the day, even in those countries that have made progress. Health services are inadequate and large numbers of people continue to die from preventable diseases. Unemployment remains at very high levels. In many countries, lack of transparency on the part of the leadership remains a major obstacle to development. Wars and armed conflict also continue to affect a disproportionate percentage of Africans, 14 of Africa's 53 countries having been affected by armed conflict in 1996.

These are truly formidable challenges on Africa's path to development, but those countries that managed to record the spectacular growth noted earlier have shown that by harnessing its potentials and putting them to work in support of development, Africa can rival even the best. These countries are beacons to the other countries seeking to strengthen their own economic bases.

Overcoming the various challenges calls for a mix of domestic reforms, political will and genuine support by the international community. Africa's leaders owe it to their people to summon the political will to take good governance seriously. Respect for human rights and the rule of law, strengthening democratization and promoting transparency and capability in public administration are indispensable ingredients for the creation of the appropriate environment for growth. Countries must adhere to the various reforms which catalyze economic growth. To establish a solid economic foundation and achieve long-term success, they must not only enact sound policies but also persevere in their implementation.

At the same time, the international community must show its determination to make a difference, by intervening in areas where it can have an impact and by investing in areas where resources are needed. New funding, a better use of existing resources and the enactment of trade and debt relief measures are essential if Africa is to build the foundation for growth. ■

**The African Baobab is one of the world's hardiest trees, thriving in even the most arid environment. It is also the tree under which some Africans traditionally meet to decide issues of common concern.*

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Counter-insurgency in Africa: The Portuguese Way of War, 1961-1974 by John P. Cann (Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, US; 1997; 216 pp; $59.95)

Death of Dignity: Angola's Civil War, by Victoria Brittain (Pluto Press, London; 1998; 108 pages).

In this succinct and impassioned account of one of Africa's longest wars, Ms. Victoria Brittain helps bring to light the political intricacies of Angola's prolonged tragedy, one little known or well-understood in the outside world. She brings to the task her skills as a seasoned journalist — she is Deputy Foreign Editor of the London *Guardian* — as well as a rare first-hand knowledge acquired during more than a decade of visits to Angola.

From the country's anti-colonial struggle, through independence from Portugal in 1975, to the present, Angola has been afflicted by virtually constant warfare. The fighting has killed many tens of thousands (most of them civilians), driven millions of villagers from their homes and destroyed much of the infrastructure and economy. Ms. Brittain, whose sympathies with the struggles and travails of ordinary people are explicit throughout her book, describes this downward spiral with much anger and indignation. Beyond noting the staggering statistics of carnage, she most effectively presents the graphic stories of individual Angolans whose lives have been shattered.

Ms. Brittain does not feign neutrality. Although sometimes quite critical of what she sees as the compromises, blunders and growing corruption among the Angolan authorities, she regards the government in Luanda as the most legitimate representative of the Angolan people's aspirations for sovereignty and social progress. In contrast, the UNITA rebel movement, once directly supported by apartheid South Africa (which repeatedly invaded Angola), Zaire, and the US, pursues "primitive fascism," she argues. Despite repeated peace agreements, the group remains reluctant to lay down its arms and pursue democratic alternatives. In discussing the complex mediation efforts of the big powers and the UN, she pulls no punches in criticizing what she regards as the ignorance, shortsightedness and even self-interest of many of these international agencies.

Amid Angola's incredibly daunting difficulties, Ms. Brittain finds that some Angolans still demonstrate remarkable resilience and stubbornly cling to the vision of peace and development. She observes that the overthrow in 1997 of the dictatorship in neighbouring Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) has shifted the military balance within Angola in the government's favour, offering slightly more hopeful prospects for the future.

AFRICA AGENDA

FUTURE EVENTS

26-28 August 1998, Hurghada (Egypt) — International Conference on Coping with Water Scarcity, organized by UNESCO. Tel (33-1) 45.68.17.46, fax 45.68.56.51.

9 September-December, New York — UN General Assembly, 53rd session.

4-8 October, Harrisburg, Virginia (US) — Worldwide Humanitarian Demining Conference, hosted by James Madison University. Contact Dr. Kay Knickrehm, tel (1-540) 568-2918, fax 568-8021.

6-8 October, Washington — World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings. Tel (1-202) 473-9516, fax 522-2632.

2-13 November, Buenos Aires (Argentina) — Fourth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Contact Michael Williams, tel (41-22) 979-9242/44, fax 797-3464, e-mail <mwilliams@unep.ch>.

9-12 November, Lyon (France) — Markets and Development, will be the theme of the first meeting of UNCTAD's Partners for Development initiative, which aims to bring together the private sector, governments, NGOs and international organizations for joint projects through which market forces may help promote development. Tel (41-22) 907-5555, fax 907-0022, email <partners@unctad.org>.

30 November-4 December, Kampala (Uganda) — General conference of the Group of 77 Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Contact the office of the Chairman of the G77, tel (1-212) 963-0192, fax 963-3515.

30 November-11 December, Dakar (Senegal) — Conference of the Parties to the International Convention on Desertification, second session. Tel (41-22) 979-9011, fax 979-9030, e-mail <secretariat@cced.ch>.

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

25-28 June, New York — First meeting of the 15 councils of the Microcredit Summit. Contact Alistair Hodgett, tel (1-202) 546-1900, fax 546-3228, e-mail <hodgett@microcreditsummit.org>.

22-23 June, London — Symposium on Children Affected by Armed Conflict organized by the UN Information Centre in London and the UK National Committee for UNICEF. Tel (44-171) 630-1981, fax 976-6478.

22-23 June, Geneva — Conference on the impact of information technology on the lives of ordinary people, organized by the UN Research Institute for Social Development. Tel (41-22) 798-8400, fax 740-0791.

3-6 June, Bremen (Germany) — Food and Agriculture Organization meeting on world fish trade. Tel (39-6) 5705-3259, fax 5705-5924.

6 May, New York — Perspectives from the South on Financing for Development in the Globalization Process. Conference sponsored by the Group of 77 and the Society for International Development. Tel (39-6) 487-2172, fax 487-2170, e-mail <info@sidint.org>.

AFRICA IN BRIEF

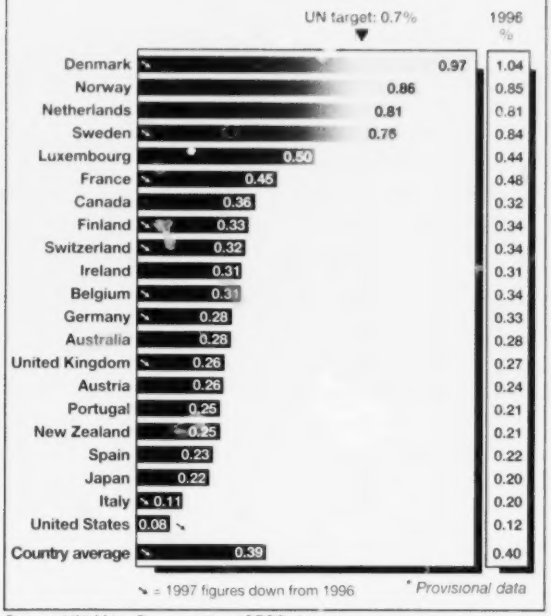
Aid falls by $8 bn, US flows drop by a third

Overall disbursements of development assistance by the largest donor countries have continued their downward trend of recent years, falling from $55.4 bn in 1996 to $47.2 in 1997, according to preliminary figures released in June by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The data highlight the aid performances of the 21 member countries of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), but figures are not yet available according to geographical destination (in 1996 sub-Saharan Africa received $9.9 bn from the DAC countries, or 58 per cent of the region's total aid receipts).

There was a decline in official development assistance (ODA) from most of the Group of Seven (G7), the largest industrial powers, with only Canada and Japan increasing their ODA in real terms. Expressed as a percentage of gross national product (GNP), aid from the US fell to its lowest level ever, 0.08 per cent, although the country still remained the world's third largest donor, giving $6.2 bn, down from $9.4 bn the year before. Japan ($9.4 bn) and France ($6.3 bn) were the largest donors in 1997. Aid from the G7 countries, as a group, represented only 0.19 per cent of their collective GNP, compared with 0.45 per cent for other DAC countries. Just four DAC countries — Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands — maintained their ODA above the UN target of 0.7 per cent of GNP (see graph).

The OECD notes that the 14.2 per cent decline in overall ODA can be attributed partly to falls in the exchange rates of other national currencies against the US dollar and to Israel's progression from DAC's "developing country" category. Taking these factors into account, the decline in ODA in real terms was 3.2 per cent. The OECD described this as a "disturbing trend," running counter not only to the improvements in the DAC countries' economic and budgetary situations, but also to their stated policy goals. ■

Official development assistance in 1997* (% of GNP)



Source: UN Africa Recovery from OECD data

Africa hits global trade 'inequities'

Many of the special measures designed to help African and other poor countries join and benefit from the liberalized international market have not yet been implemented, African trade ministers declared at the 18-20 May meetings of the World Trade Organization (WTO), held in Geneva. On behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and African Economic Community (AEC), they expressed concern over ongoing "inequities" in the multilateral trading system, noting that Africa in particular "continues to be bypassed" by the benefits of growth and global integration.

Many African countries have experienced difficulties in adjusting their economies to an increasingly competitive world market and in implementing policies required by the WTO, the ministers said. As South African President Nelson Mandela said during his address to the session marking the 50th anniversary of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), the WTO's predecessor: "Rules must be applied without fear or favour, but if they contain prescriptions that cannot be complied with by all, or the results benefit too few, then injustice will emerge."

The world's 48 least-developed countries (LDCs), of which 33 are in Africa, account for just 0.04 per cent of world exports, said LDC ministers. Zimbabwean Industry and Commerce Minister Nathan Shamuyarira called for "special measures to deal with their difficult situation." African ministers declared that WTO Director-General Renato Ruggiero's proposal for duty-free treatment of products originating from LDCs has been "all but forgotten."

Noting that WTO negotiations recently have broadened to encompass new areas, such as basic telecommunications and financial services, the African ministers urged that new issues not be taken up until the Uruguay Round agreements favouring the poorest countries actually are implemented. Among other points, they appealed for increased market access for African exports, compensatory aid to food-importing countries, technical assistance to help African governments implement their obligations and exercise their rights under the WTO agreement, and the granting of observer status to the OAU/AEC in WTO bodies. ■

EU sets out proposals for new Lomé Convention

Foreign ministers of the European Union (EU) have endorsed a draft negotiating mandate for a new Lomé Convention, the trade and aid pact between the EU and 71 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Before it expires in February 2000, the current convention must be revised to meet World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. The agreement, reached in Luxembourg on 30 June, comes before formal negotiations for a new pact begin in September between the European Commission, the EU's executive body, and the ACP countries.

The Commission's blueprint for a new Lomé Convention, first unveiled in February, promises that exports from ACP countries will have the same access to the EU market as under the current Lomé agreement (although in practice the share of such exports has declined, from 4.7 per cent in 1990 to 2.8 per cent in 1994). In return for this pledge, the ACP states would be expected to open up their own markets to EU exports over a transitional period of 5-10 years. However, ACP countries have argued that if they allow tariff-free access to EU goods, their economies will not withstand the competition and their public finances will

be adversely affected.

The Commission acknowledged that the least developed countries (LDCs) are less prepared for free trade and therefore will need to be protected from the rigours of reciprocal trade with a powerful bloc like the EU. The proposed solution for these countries is the granting of "enhanced" preferences, or complete tariff-free access, to the European market. British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said the compromise in Luxembourg would mean that the poorest developing countries would be able to export "essentially all products" to the EU duty-free by 2005. The ministers also agreed that any future review of the beef, banana and sugar protocols with ACP countries would be accompanied by transitional financial support for the affected countries. ■

Board of Directors named for Ted Turner's fund

Ms. Graça Machel, Mozambique's former First Lady and Minister of Education, and author of a 1996 report on children and armed conflict commissioned by the UN General Assembly, has been named as a member of the Board of Directors of the United Nations Foundation. A non-profit entity, the Foundation was established in January to channel the $1 bn pledged to the UN last September by US media magnate Ted Turner.

The pledge is to be disbursed to UN projects and programmes in the humanitarian, economic and social fields in $100 mn installments over 10 years, and the UN Foundation handed its first tranche of awards, totalling some $22 mn, in May. Projects in Africa to benefit from the awards will focus on the eradication of Guinea worm in Central Africa; nutrition and household food security for vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone; reducing measles and vitamin A deficiency in Nigeria; demobilization of child soldiers in Sierra Leone; enhancing reproductive health in the Comoros; helping Burkinabè women in the production and marketing of butter from shea nuts; and socioeconomic reintegration of landmine victims in Angola, Mozambique and Somalia.

Other members of the Foundation's Board of Directors include Mr. Turner, as chairman; Ms. Ruth Cardoso, First Lady of Brazil; Ms. Emma Rothschild, Director of the Centre for History and Economics at King's College, Cambridge University; Mr. Maurice Strong, Executive Coordinator of UN Reform; Mr. Timothy E. Wirth, President of the Foundation; former US Ambassador to the UN Andrew Young; and Prof. Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. ■

UNICEF highlights landmines threat

An interactive multimedia exhibition, "Landmines: Danger at Every Step," was opened on 9 April at UNICEF House in New York by Executive Director Carol Bellamy (right). With her (from left to right) were: Mr. Rudy von Bernuth, Associate Vice-President for Humanitarian Assistance, Save the Children; Ms. Jody Williams, coordinator of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, which won the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize; and UNICEF Special Representative for the Performing Arts Judy Collins. The exhibition is part of a campaign to raise public awareness of landmines, which each year kill or maim some 26,000 civilians, mostly women and children, in more than 70 countries. It also aims to help mobilize support for ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. The convention was opened for signature in Ottawa, Canada, on 3-4 December 1997 and has been signed by 125 UN member-states. Thirty-two of the signatories are from Africa, the largest contingent so far. Forty ratifications are needed for the treaty to enter into force, and 19 countries had ratified by the end of June.

African leaders face challenges of globalization

Globalization is "irreversible," 16 African leaders, mainly from West and Central Africa, agreed in a meeting with World Bank President James Wolfensohn in Dakar, Senegal, on 20-21 June. They also acknowledged that it is up to African leaders to create the conditions for the continent to join the globalization process. Open market competitiveness, the adoption of successful industrialization strategies, and strong regional integration through infrastructure development were cited as essential factors in meeting the new challenges.

The closed-door meeting was a follow up to a similar forum initiated by the World Bank president in January in Kampala, Uganda, with 12 leaders from East and Southern Africa. Attending the Dakar meeting were the heads of state of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, São Tomé and Principe and Sierra Leone, as well as the South African vice president. Mr. Wolfensohn said he initiated the forums to alter the way in which the World Bank does business with sub-Saharan countries, in a spirit of "true partnership." ■

UN Security Council condemns Congo massacres

In a sharply worded presidential statement, the UN Security Council on 13 July declared that it "condemns the massacres, other atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law," including "crimes against humanity," carried out in Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo during the conflict of 1996-97.

Citing evidence collected by an investigative team of the UN Secretary-General, the Council also called on the governments of Congo and Rwanda to "bring to justice any

persons found to have been involved in these or other massacres." Depending on their actions, the Council also expressed its readiness to consider "additional steps" to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The Security Council statement came shortly after Secretary-General Kofi Annan issued the report of his investigative team. The team had first been deployed to Congo in August 1997 to examine allegations of massacres, especially of Rwandese refugees, but was withdrawn in April 1998 because it was not allowed to fully carry out its mission. It cites evidence of massacres of hundreds of refugees and concludes that all the parties to the violence in the country committed serious human rights violations, and that some killings by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (which took power in May 1997) and its allies, including elements of the Rwandese army, constitute crimes against humanity. The governments of Congo and Rwanda both expressed serious concerns about the report's credibility.

In introducing the report, Mr. Annan noted the "vicious cycle of violations of human rights and revenge, fueled by impunity," throughout the Great Lakes region. "This cycle," he affirmed, "has to be brought to an end if lasting peace and stability are to be restored to the region. Those guilty of violations must be brought to book." ■

UNAIDS: hope amid the devastation

The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to have a devastating impact in Africa, with 21 million adults and children infected, or nearly 70 per cent of the world's estimated 30.6 million infected people, according to a report issued by the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The 10 countries with the highest rates of HIV infection among people aged 15–49 all are located in sub-Saharan Africa, with staggering figures for Zimbabwe (25.8 per cent) and Botswana (25.1 per cent), said the report, presented at the 12th Annual World AIDS Conference, held in Geneva from 28 June through 5 July 1998.

However, two African countries — Uganda and Senegal — stand in stark contrast to the overall trend, because their anti-AIDS programmes are resulting in falling HIV infection rates. Young people in Uganda and Senegal are much less susceptible to HIV infection than their counterparts elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, and health experts attribute that fact to the aggressive "safe sexual behaviour" campaign launched by both governments. ■

Reproductive health in Africa needs more funding

The population of sub-Saharan Africa has doubled in just 25 years, and is expected to double again in less than three decades from the current level of 620 million, according to a recent study by Population Action International (PAI), a Washington based non-governmental organization. The PAI report, *Africa's Population Challenge: Accelerating Progress in Reproductive Health*, presents a comprehensive overview of Africa's population and reproductive health situation.

While acknowledging progress in some countries such as Botswana, Kenya and Zimbabwe — where use of family planning services currently exceeds 40 per cent of married women of child-bearing age — the report brings into sharp focus challenges that remain more onerous in Africa than in any other region.

These include the fact that Africa is home to 10 per cent of the world's women, but accounts for 40 per cent of the world's pregnancy-related deaths. The PAI report says African farmers would have to increase production five-fold just to meet the region's basic food needs in the year 2050.

Addressing the challenge of Africa's poor reproductive health and rapid population growth requires significantly increased financing, the report says. It suggests that donors at least double their contribution by the year 2000 from the current level of roughly $500 mn annually, if African countries are to reach the goal of universal access to basic reproductive health services by the year 2015. ■

El Niño spurs African disaster preparedness

The El Niño weather phenomenon had a varied impact across Africa over 1997-98, bringing torrential rains in East Africa and drought conditions in parts of Southern Africa. Several thousand people were killed in floods that ravaged Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda (with most of the deaths in Somalia), while the entire region suffered serious economic losses. In Kenya, alone, government officials estimate that it will cost KSh8 bn ($130 mn) to repair the damage.

Although El Niño did not bring a devastating drought across Southern Africa, as initial forecasts had warned, it did contribute to below-average harvests in several countries. As of late May, Zimbabwe's Crop Forecasting Committee put grain production (excluding wheat) in the 1997/98 agricultural season at 1.5 mn tonnes, or 23 per cent below the 1990-97 annual average. Zambia's national maize production was about 30 per cent less than the 1988-97 average. South Africa's cereal output also will be well below normal, but since the country usually produces significant surpluses, there will be little impact on food security there. Mozambique will have above-average national production, thanks to good rains and a 10 per cent increase in land area planted under food crops. Overall, according to June projections by the Southern African Development Community's early warning unit, the region will face a 1.35 mn tonne maize deficit this year, compared with a 204,000 tonne shortfall in 1997.

Although warnings about El Niño's possible impact came several months earlier, not all countries were equally ready to meet the threat. "We are slow, lack proper coordination and are often haphazard in our approach to disaster preparedness," acknowledged Kenyan Agriculture Minister Musalia Mudavadi, in explaining his country's vulnerability.

An April 1998 report by the US Agency for International Development's Famine Early Warning System found that, in face of the El Niño threat in Southern Africa, Mozambique, Swaziland and South Africa were among the leaders in reassessing and reformulating their structures and plans for early warning and response. Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia already had response mechanisms in place for several years, but Zimbabwe was relatively slow in responding and Angola did not have a drought plan in place. As governments develop better disaster plans, the report urged them to give adequate attention to the important roles of both the media and the private sector.

Following the example set earlier by their colleagues in Southern Africa, climate and food security experts from throughout the Horn of Africa and East Africa met in Nairobi, Kenya, in February for a "Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum." Besides discussing ways to refine climate forecasting, they also focused on how to integrate such forecasts into their countries' decision-making processes, to improve mitigation plans and better safeguard food security.

AFRICA WATCH

PEACEKEEPING

Promoting Angolan peace, UN envoy Beye dies in crash

UN Special Representative in Angola Alioune Blondin Beye and seven of his colleagues were killed on 25 June 1998 when their aircraft crashed in Côte d'Ivoire. Mr. Beye, a "dedicated and dynamic peacemaker," as UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called him, was on one of his many diplomatic missions to seek support for the Angolan peace process.

Alioune Blondin Beye

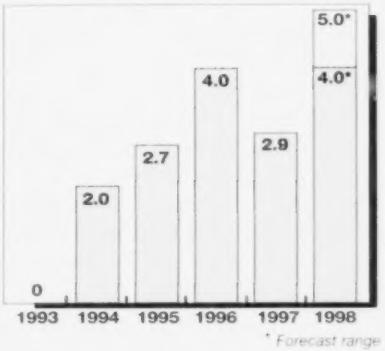
A barrister and expert in international law, Mr. Beye served as foreign minister of Mali in 1978-86 and as a senior official at the African Development Bank, before being named Special Representative in Angola. At the time of his arrival there in June 1993, the country was in the midst of a renewed civil war between the government and the UNITA rebel movement, following the failure of previous settlement attempts. Mr. Beye persuaded the two sides to resume talks, and after nearly a year of difficult negotiations, they signed the Lusaka Protocol in November 1994. Despite some progress toward demobilization, implementation of the accord has been slow and rocky, with Mr. Beye constantly urging the protagonists to carry through on their agreement.

At a memorial service in New York for Mr. Beye and his team, the UN Secretary-General paid homage to "colleagues fallen in the cause of peace" and hoped that Angola would one day be united and at peace, so that their deaths would not be in vain. Killed with Mr. Beye were: Mr. Koffi Adjoyi from Togo, Mr. Beandegar Dessande from Chad, Mr. Amadou Moctar Gueye from Senegal, Mr. Ibikunle Williams from Nigeria, Mr. Alvaro Costa from Portugal, and their pilots, Mr. Jason Hunter and Mr. Andrew McCurrach, from South Africa. ■

Strong African economic growth forecast for 1998

Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) will likely grow between 4 and 5 per cent this year, after 2.9 per cent last year, according to a report by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The higher forecast is based on the assumption that good weather will prevail and that world market prices for Africa's key exports will improve. The lower forecast assumes that only one of those two factors will materialize, says the ECA's annual *Survey of the Economic and Social Situation in Africa, 1997*, of which a summary was released in April. Since the impact of the El Niño weather phenomenon has largely passed, the ECA expects weather conditions in 1998 to be more favourable than last year, contributing to a 7 per cent growth in agricultural output.

Africa's GDP growth (%)



Source: UN Africa Recovery from ECA data

El Niño had a negative impact on agricultural production in 1997, which grew only 1.7 per cent, compared with 5.2 per cent in 1996. Combined with other trends, this held back the overall GDP growth rate for the continent to only 2.9 per cent in 1997, down from 4 per cent the year before. Growth in manufacturing value added remained the same in 1997 as in 1996 (2.5 per cent), while growth in mining declined from 6.5 per cent to 3.8 per cent. The value of African exports increased by 5.9 per cent, with an 8 per cent growth in volume; but the main benefits flowed to oil-exporting countries, which attained a $32.9 bn trade surplus in 1997, while non-oil countries suffered a $24.6 bn deficit.

By subregion, the highest GDP growth rates were in Central Africa (3.8 per cent), West Africa (3.7 per cent) and East Africa (3.5 per cent). The lowest was in Southern Africa, at 2.4 per cent. Growth in North Africa was 2.8 per cent, close to the continental average, but since North Africa's 1996 growth was 4.4 per cent, this reflected the biggest slowdown for any subregion in Africa.

APPOINTMENTS

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed ***Mr. Thandika Mkandawire*** *(left) as Director of the Geneva-based UN Research Institute for Social Development. A Swedish national of Malawian origin, Mr. Mkandawire was formerly (1986-96) Executive Secretary of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), headquartered in Dakar. At the time of his new appointment, he was Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Development Research in Copenhagen.*

Chile's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, ***Ambassador Juan Somavia*** *(below, left), has been elected as the next Director-General of the International Labour Organization, with effect from March 1999. Ambassador Somavia was Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, and has also served (currently and in 1993-95) as President of the UN Economic and Social Council.*

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has designated Norway's Ambassador to the U.S. ***Tom Eric Vraalsen*** *(far right) as his Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs for the Sudan. Ambassador Vraalsen, who will continue to represent his country in Washington, was formerly Norway's Permanent Representative to the UN (1982-89) and Minister of Development Cooperation (1989-90).*